

THE COUNSELS
OF
WILLIAM DE BRITAINNE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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THE
COUNSELS OF WILLIAM DE BRITAINE

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HERBERT H. STURMER

Author of 'Some Poitevin Protestants in London'



LONDON
F. E. ROBINSON
20 GREAT RUSSELL STREET
1897

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571
20
597



Enscribed to

SIR CLEMENT COURTENAY KNOLLYS, K.C.M.G.,

WITH ADMIRATION AND REGARD

BY


H. H. S.





PREFACE.

(1) *This book.*

T is hoped that this volume may not only be of general interest to thoughtful people, but may be considered specially suitable as a gift-book for any young man 'coming of age,' or leaving a public-school to enter the wider world of men and affairs.

It is a revision, or perhaps it would be more correct to say a re-writing, of the eleventh (1717) edition of a book called '*Humane Prudence*,' the first edition of which appeared in 1680. Although the lesser writers of the Stuart period have been of interest to me for many years, it was not until 1895 that the title '*Humane Prudence*' caught my eye from a catalogue-page which I was looking through. Since then I have examined copies of various editions of the work, and I consider the eleventh edition to be in some ways the best one. But anyone who has come across it will have seen that its puzzling printer's errors, and its extraordinary *mélange* of styles, make it little less in need of revision for a modern reader than any other edition of the work. As to my aims, method, and success (or failure) in the revising of '*Humane Prudence*,' I can only feel

confident that no reviewer will treat me severely if he has had experience in sub-editorial work, and remembers how anxiously he strove to reconcile the altering of contributors' work with the preserving of their 'good things' intact. For the toil involved in hundreds of little alterations, transpositions, and excisions, I shall be amply repaid if any thoughtful reviewer (and it is wonderful to think how careful and kind reviewers usually are) feels obliged to say that some expression of 'De Britaine's' is 'rather more modern than Mr. Sturmer should have inserted in "De Britaine's" text,' or praises some phrase of mine as being one of 'De Britaine's' good things. Also, painful as it is to put a sacrificial knife to the throat of Style, the presence of Justice must sometimes compel the act. And then, if one has anything of the passion for the perfect word—the desire for the ultimate union of thought and expression—which influences a Flaubert or a Henry James, one suffers. But dead authors are like dead creeds, in that they should be handled as tenderly as possible.

I have added an occasional note to the text of this volume, chiefly to call attention to puzzling or curious points in the text of 'Humane Prudence,' but sometimes in the hope of making the pages look less monotonous than they otherwise might do. As a rule, I have tried to correct or verify allusions in the text rather than put notes to them.

The Latin quotations have been kindly revised for me by a friend who, I hope, remembers more Latin than I have forgotten.

(2) *The eleventh edition of 'Humane Prudence.'*

There is a copy of the *eleventh* edition of 'Humane Prudence' in my possession. Its title-page reads as follows ('Human' for 'Humane' being possibly a printer's error, as the pages of my copy are headed

with the older spelling throughout, and the spelling is 'Humane' upon the title-page of the twelfth edition): 'Human Prudence: or, The Art by which a Man may Raise Himself and His Fortune to Grandeur. Corrected and very much Enlarged. The Eleventh Edition. [Latin quotation]. London, Printed for Richard Sare, at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn. MDCCXVII.' The sub-title may have been a 'happy thought' of a publisher's, but is hardly fair to the writer, although there are a few passages in the book which seem to have a lower tone than I cared to reproduce in my version. This eleventh edition begins with an 'Epistle Dedicatory' addressed 'To the Virtuous and most Ingenious Edw. Hungerford, Esq.', which ends thus: 'I will not detain you any longer at present, than to intreat you to look into this Mirror; as made up of other Men's Crystals, and my own Errors; wherein you may see what you are, as well as what you ought to be.

Worthy Sir,

I am your faithful Friend and Servant,

W. de Britaine.'

This edition consists of title-page, four pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' a two-page table of contents, and pp. 1-254 of text. The text is made up of thirty-two numbered and titled 'Sections,' and of a kind of appendix entitled 'Sententiæ Stellares: or, Maxims of Prudence to be observed by Artisans of State.' These 'Sententiæ' are numbered 1-122.

'De Britaine,' having frankly stated that his book is mainly a compilation, does not indicate by quotation marks or otherwise the sources he has utilized, but welds his extracts into a more or less continuous text. The reader of this volume who knows his 'Seneca' will, however, recognise a fine passage upon page 79; the influence of Epictetus runs throughout

the book (*e.g.*, p. 121); Marcus Aurelius is sometimes quoted almost exactly (*e.g.*, p. 49), and his exquisite personality seems constantly to hover near us as we read. Sir Roger L'Estrange's 'Seneca's Morals' is said to have first appeared in 1688, but the earliest edition of its second part which I have seen is the one printed in 1693 and pagged continuously from the last page of the fifth edition of the first part printed for Hindmarsh in 1694. I have compared this edition in places with the *fifth* (1689) edition of 'Humane Prudence,' and I find that some sentences are almost identical in the two books. Thus, the sentence which this volume has on page 148, 'It goes a great way,' etc., will be found both at page 247 of 'Humane Prudence' and at page 277 of L'Estrange's 'Seneca' with no essential difference.

(3) Editions of '*Humane Prudence*.'

'Humane Prudence' was translated into French under the title of 'Prudence Humaine, . . .' The 'Quatorzième Edition,' the only edition of which I have seen a copy, says that it is 'traduit de l'Anglois sur la douzième Edition de Londres . . . Par James de la Cour.' In his dedication-preface the translator says: 'Cet ouvrage a été imprimé douze fois à Londres en Anglois, & a été si estimé dans ce Royaume & ailleurs, parmi les gens d'Esprit & de bon goût, qu'ils se faisoient un plaisir de le lire presque (*sic*) continuellement, y trouvant tout ce qui peut rendre un homme parfait dans quelque Etat qu'il soit.' This French version 'Se vend a Francfort sur le Mein, dans la Ziegelgasse chez l'Editeur, demeurant chez Mr. Herford. MDCCXLIV.'

Not being able to hear of a copy of the *first* edition of 'Humane Prudence' as existing in London, and having come across only one person (Mr. Salkeld,

the well-known bookseller in Clapham Road) who had ever seen a copy, I thought it best to go to the Bodleian Library at Oxford to see the copy mentioned in 'Halkett & Laing.' I had found the first edition entered as a production of Easter Term, 1680, in a contemporary book-list.

The Bodleian copy is a thin 12mo. volume, with the following title: 'Humane Prudence, or, the Art by which a Man may Raise Himself and Fortune to Grandeur. By A. B. London, Printed for Robert Harford, at the Angel in Cornhil, near the Royal Exchange. M.DC.LXXX.'

The preface is a well-written and sensible address from 'The Bookseller to the Reader,' and begins thus: 'I have had these few Sheets so long by me, that the Author (who is a Gentleman of Modesty and Worth) has ev'n almost forgot them, and left it to me to recommend them to the publick'; and so on for 8 pages. The preface speaks of 'the Credit (viz. reputation) of the Author,' but yields no clue to his identity. The text of the volume occupies pp. 1-131. It is made up of 33 short (numbered but untitled) sections, and of a kind of appendix called 'Sententiæ Stellares' (see account given above of the *eleventh* edition), of which the paragraphs are numbered 1-71.

Of the *second* edition of 'Humane Prudence' I have never seen a copy, nor do I at present know of any library in which one exists. I have found its entry in a contemporary catalogue as a production of Easter Term, 1682. The title is there given thus: 'Humane Prudence: or, the Art by which a man may raise himself and Fortune to Grandeur. By A. B. The second Edition, with the addition of a Table, in twelves. Price bound 1s. Printed for J. Lawrence, at the Angel in Cornhil.'

The only copy of the *third* edition of 'Humane

Prudence' which I have come across is in the Lambeth Palace Library. It is a thin 12mo. volume. The title-page bears no statement as to authorship, but gives the information that this is 'The Third Edition : Corrected and very much enlarged in every Section throughout the whole Book, by the Author.' Then comes a Latin quotation, followed by the information that the book is published at 'London, Printed by J. Rawlins, for R. Sare at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn, 1686.' The volume consists of a title-page, seven pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' a blank page, a text of pp. 1-140, and a two-page table of contents. The text is made up of twenty-two numbered and titled 'sections' and of (109) 'Sententiæ Stellares.' 'The Epistle Dedicatory' is addressed 'To His much Honoured Friend Sir T. S. K^t & Baronet'; the 'T' is rather a bad letter, or has given a bad impression. The tone of this 'Epistle' is distinctly that of a gentleman addressing a young man of family with whom he is well acquainted; it begins with, 'Nothing gives a greater lustre and Ennoblement to the bravest person, than to act according to the Maximes of Prudence'; and ends with, 'here thou mayst see what thou art, or what thou shouldst be.' I am Sir, Your Friend and Servant *W. de Britaine*.

As to the *fourth* edition of 'Humane Prudence' I have not come across any information, much less have I news of any copy of it.

The *fifth* edition (1689) may perhaps be called the parent of the later ones; for they do not differ much from it, whereas it is much fuller than the earlier editions. There is a copy in the British Museum. It is a thick little 12mo. volume in large type; it consists of title-page, eight pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' a two-page table of contents, and

pp. 1-359 of text. The text is made up of titled sections, numbered 1-32, and of (123) '*Sententiæ Stellares.*' There is no statement as to authorship upon the title-page, which says that this is 'The Fifth Edition: Very much enlarged, divers new Sections added, and the whole Corrected, by the Author.' In this and succeeding editions there is a motto on the title-page; and the book is produced at 'London, Printed by J. Rawlins, for R. Sare at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holbourn, 1689. Price 1s. 6d.' This edition has an 'Epistle Dedicatory,' which is addressed to Edward Hungerford in the same form as in the eleventh edition (see account of *eleventh* edition above), and ends with the signature of *W. de Britaine*. In this edition the printer runs out of large type in the middle of section twenty-nine, and finishes the book in smaller-sized type.

(*All the later editions*, which I am about to describe briefly, are dedicated to *Edward Hungerford*, have their 'Epistles Dedicatory' signed *W. de Britaine*, have a Latin quotation on their title-pages, and are made up of thirty-two 'sections' and some '*Sententiæ Stellares.*')

Of the *sixth* edition there is a copy in the British Museum, a neat 12mo. volume. Its title-page says that it is 'The Sixth Edition Corrected and Enlarged by the Author.' It is produced at 'London, Printed by J. Rawlins, for R. Sare, at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn, 1693.' It chiefly differs from the fifth edition in that it is printed in much smaller type. It consists of title-page, eight pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' a two-page table of contents, and a text of pp. 1-284, including (123) '*Sententiæ Stellares.*'

Of the *seventh* edition I have no information whatever up to the present moment.

The only copy of the *eighth* edition of '*Humane*

Prudence' which I have seen is in private hands. It is a 12mo., and calls itself simply 'The Eighth Edition Corrected.' It is produced at 'London, Printed for Richard Sare, at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holbourn, 1700.' It consists of title-page, five pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' one page of a table of contents, and pp. 1-229 of text (including 123 'Sententiæ Stellares').

Of the *ninth* edition there is a copy at the British Museum. It is a 12mo. volume. The title-page simply speaks of it as 'The Ninth Edition Corrected and Enlarged.' It is produced at 'London, Printed for Richard Sare, at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn, MDCCII.' This edition is very much like the eighth edition, but has 'The Epistle Dedicatory' printed in larger type. It consists of title-page, six pages of the 'Epistle,' a two-page table of contents, and pp. 1-229 of text (including 122 'Sententiæ Stellares').

Of the *tenth* edition of 'Humane Prudence' there is a copy in the British Museum. It is a 12mo. volume. The title-page says that it is 'The Tenth Edition Corrected and very much Enlarged.' It is produced at 'London, Printed for Richard Sare, at Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn, MDCCX.' It does not differ much from the ninth edition. It consists of title-page, six pages of the 'Epistle Dedicatory,' a two-page table of contents, and pp. 1-266 of text (including 122 'Sententiæ Stellares'). In the middle of number 88 of the 'Sententiæ' the printer runs out of large type, and begins to use a smaller size for the rest of the text.

The *eleventh* edition has been already described above.

There is a copy of the *twelfth* edition of 'Humane Prudence' in the British Museum. It is catalogued as an 8vo. Its title-page says that it is 'Corrected and very much Enlarged. The Twelfth Edition.

[Latin quotation.] London: Printed for J. and J. Knapton, D. Midwinter, W. Innys, J. Osborn and T. Longman, and R. Robinson. MDCCXXIX.' The volume consists of title-page, four pages of 'The Epistle Dedicatory,' a two-page table of contents, and a text of pp. 1-254, including the (122) 'Sententiæ Stellares.' It is a very slightly enlarged reprint of the eleventh edition.

(4) *Other writings of 'De Britaine.'*

'The Dutch Usurpation: or, A brief View of the Behaviour of the States-General of the United Provinces, towards the Kings of Great Britain: with some of their Cruelties and Injustices exercised upon the Subjects of the English Nation. As also, a Discovery of what Arts they have used to Arrive at their late Grandeur, &c. By William de Britaine. [Quotation from Virgil.] London: Printed for Jonathan Edwin, at the Three Roses in Ludgate-street. MDCLXXII.'

I find that this pamphlet was licensed on June 24, 1672, as a publication of the Trinity term. It is a pamphlet of 35 pages, with a title-page and dedication, which make four pages more. The dedication is (in verse): 'To His Royal Highness the Duke of York.' This pamphlet has been reprinted in the 'Harleian Miscellany.' I have no reason to doubt that it is by the author of 'Humane Prudence'; the style is evidently that of the writer of the book, and, indeed, the book appears to quote one or two ideas from the pamphlet. The dedication is in flattering, but not in servile or even humble, terms, and the pamphlet has the tone of being written by a scholar and a gentleman.

'The Interest of England in the present War with Holland. By the Author of The Dutch Usurpation. [Latin quotation.] London, Printed

for Jonathan Edwin, at the three Roses in Ludgate-street, 1672.' This is a pamphlet of twenty-six numbered pages, with a title-page and dedication, which make four pages more. The dedication is 'To The King,' and begins :

' DREAD SIR,
Since Heaven your Righteous Cause has own'd,
And with Success Your powerful Navy crown'd ;'

which fixes the date of the production of the pamphlet as later than May 30, 1672. There is internal evidence that this pamphlet is by the author of 'Humane Prudence'; indeed, its last paragraph is almost reproduced in that book. Upon page 24 there is a personal reference which perhaps implies that the writer is British rather than English. At the end there is a list of other publications of Edwin's, in which 'The Dutch Usurpation' is given as by *William de Britain*.

I found that the Bodleian Library had a copy of a pamphlet by 'De Britaine,' of which I had never found any mention, much less any copy, elsewhere. It has the following title-page: 'A Sober Enquiry, whether it be Lawful for Subjects without Royal Authority to take up Arms in Defence of the Protestant Religion, to prevent Popery. London: Printed for A. Banks. 1684.' It is prefaced by an Epistle Dedicatory 'To the most Noble Colonel, Colonel Edward Mansel, one of the worthy Members of the most Honourable and Loyal Society at the White Horse Tavern . . .' which winds up with the signature of '. . . Your most Faithful, most obedient Servant and Countryman, *Ap William, d' Bretaine*.'

The text of the pamphlet occupies ten pages, quotes the Fathers, and shows much knowledge of history and law. Its drift may be gathered from

the conclusion of one argument in it: 'the sole power of the Sword is in the King.' The pamphlet winds up with a passage almost exactly identical with three sentences of Section III. of 'Humane Prudence,' followed by these words: 'So I take my leave and rest, Sir, Your Humble Servant, *Ap William d' Britaine.*'

In the Library at Lambeth Palace I have noticed a pamphlet, anonymous and without printer's name, which strikes me as possibly written by 'De Britaine.' But there are two other writers, at least, one of whom may have written it. It is entitled 'The Royal Fishing Revived,' and is dated 'London, 1670.'

(5) *Who were 'De Britaine' and 'Edward Hungerford'?*

The British Museum Library Catalogue, Watt's 'Bibliotheca Britannica,' Allibone, Lowndes, and many libraries and persons, have treated 'William de Britaine' as if it were a real name. Even Halkett and Laing's book follows suit. And yet I have ransacked in vain such printed and MS. sources of information as I could think of in the search for any person who ever bore the name of William de Britaine.

There have been two earlier discussions of this question of the authorship of 'Humane Prudence,' one in 1792-93, and one in 1854-5; but the identification of 'De Britaine' was hindered rather than helped by them. I have examined the black-letter French work of Corbichon's referred to in the discussions; it is of great interest, but has nothing whatever to do with 'Humane Prudence.'

And now we come to a second puzzle, the solution of which affects the first. Who was 'Edward Hungerford'? The following sentences are addressed to him

in the fifth edition of 'Humane Prudence,' and similar ones are found in the later editions.

'Some part of this Manual was formerly Dedicated to a Person of great Honour and Merit, who is since deceased; you being the next Heir to all his Virtues, there is none can make so good a Title to *Humane Prudence* as your Self. . . .

'As much as you excel others in the goods of Fortune, so ought you to be excellent amongst the good in Virtue.

'The Nobleness of your Geniture is a Spur to Virtue: and if Virtue could have been propagated, you had been one of the most Virtuous Persons in the World. . . .'

To what Edward Hungerford can such words be addressed, by a man such as 'De Britaine' evidently was, except the Edward Hungerford (son of Sir Edward Hungerford, K.B., of Farleigh Castle), who died in 1681? Yet the fifth edition of 'Humane Prudence' is dated 1689.

But there was an Edward Hungerford of Trinity College, Oxford, and the Middle Temple, who died in 1733² (aged 70), left property behind him (I have seen an MS. summary of his will), and was a son of Francis Hungerford, M.D. Dr. Hungerford was an ex-Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford. He settled at Reading, and his son Edward was 'of Burfield' (? Burghfield) in later life. They seem to have been men of fine character and of genuine culture. Their descent (through the Cadenham branch of the Hungerfords of Wiltshire) from the first Lord Hungerford (who died in 1449) is quite clear. But did this Edward Hungerford, in 1689, 'excel others in the goods of Fortune' sufficiently to let us identify him as the 'Edward Hungerford, Esq.,' of 'De Britaine's' dedicatory 'Epistle'?

Mr. Edward Hungerford of Farleigh Castle is

(apparently conclusively) known to have died under age in 1681 ; indeed, his will (nuncupative), of which I have seen an MS. summary, seems to prove the point. He had married about 1677 the Lady 'Alathea' Compton, daughter of James, third Earl of Northampton, by Isabella his wife. [The Countess was Isabella, 'youngest' daughter and 'co-heir' of Richard (Sackville), third Earl of Dorset, by Anne, (*de jure suo jure* Baroness Clifford.)] Lady Alathea went out 'to a play' one fine day, but the performance she really attended was her own marriage in Sir Edward Hungerford's town-house ; her family was thought to be 'more angry at the proceeding than at the match, for he is a very considerable fortune and a handsome man.' How little did the 'handsome' lad and his rather juvenile bride think that neither of them would live to reach the age of twenty-one years, that no issue of their marriage would survive, and that Sir Edward Hungerford (after selling his historic castle, and squandering his immense revenues) would live on in poverty long after their names were almost forgotten ! If we could think that it was to Edward Hungerford of Farleigh that 'Humane Prudence' was dedicated, surely its pages would seem to us to be perfumed with all the scented sadness of Lady Alathea's story—a life-record so short, so pitifully human.

(6) *A possible solution.*

Historical and bibliographical books and MSS. having failed to help us to identify the personality of 'William de Britaine,' let us turn to genealogy. Genealogy is a bad master, but a useful servant.

We have seen that Edward *Mansel* is a 'country-man' of *Ap William d' Bretaine*, who is elsewhere called 'William de Britaine.' Let us take the Mansels (or Mansells) of Carmarthenshire and

Glamorganshire, and we find Edward Mansels at once. An Edward Mansel of Carmarthenshire was created a Baronet February 22, 1696; he had a great-uncle Edward, an officer in the army. There is or was a 'Mansell's Chapel' (in the church of *Kidwelly* in Carmarthenshire) which the Rev. John Mansell built or restored in 1767.

Let us consider 'De Britaine,' then, as possibly a South-Welshman. If he was so, to what 'K^t & Baronet' would he be likely to dedicate a book (revised for press, perhaps, in 1685, and) published in 1686? Probably to Sir Edward *Stradling*, of St. Donat's Castle in the county of Glamorgan. Now, Sir Edward's death is usually stated to have occurred in September, 1685, but I have seen 1686 pencilled in a copy of a Stradling pedigree, a fact perhaps worth consideration.

And who was this Sir Edward Stradling's wife? No other than Elizabeth, daughter of Anthony *Hungerford* of Farleigh Castle. And who was Sir Edward's mother? Catherine (Pery or Perry) who married secondly Bussy *Mansell* of Britton Ferry in the county of Glamorgan.

If it were possible, therefore, to accept Sir Edward Stradling as the 'K^t & Baronet,' we might perhaps accept his son, the last Sir Edward Stradling (who married a sister of the first Lord Mansel) as 'De Britaine's' Edward Hungerford. A son of Sir Edward Stradling's naturally would be 'next Heir to all' his father's 'Virtues.' And being a Hungerford in blood, though not in name, he might have a book dedicated to him as 'Edward Hungerford'; I have some vague recollection of a similar case. But this is perhaps too ingenious a conjecture.

And now we will pass to '*William de Britaine*,' otherwise '*Ap William d' Bretagne*.' As the reader of 'Humane Prudence' and of this preface has seen,

we are looking for (1) a South-Welshman, (2) a man who has seen a great deal of life, (3) a classical scholar, (4) a man interested in the history and literature of the Continent of Europe, (5) a discreet man, of quiet tastes, who finally retires from the busy world to a country life, (6) a man fond of aphorisms and epigrams, and (7) a man whose father's Christian name was William.

And what author of the reigns of Charles II. and James II. meets these requirements? For one, John Davies of *Kidwelly* (Carmarthenshire), son of *William* Davies. For an admirable account of John Davies of Kidwelly one need go no further than the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' The article is from the pen of Mr. S. L. Lee; it contains a bibliography (of Davies' writings, translations, etc.) of very high value, which must have cost Mr. Lee great trouble to compile. Davies was probably born in May, 1625, was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, and at St. John's College, Cambridge, travelled in France, settled and wrote in London, retired to his birth-place (Kidwelly), and died there in 1693. He was author, translator, or prefacer of more than forty books. He commonly used the initials J. D. as author or compiler, but in one case he used 'F. W.' John Hall's 'Paradoxes' (1653) has a prefatory letter by Davies, and the works of Davies include 'Epic-tetus Junior, or Maximes of Modern Morality. In Two Centuries. 1670.' His 'Prudential Reflections, Moral Considerations, and Stoical Maximes' (a translation) is dated 1674. In 1679 he issued 'Political and Military Observations. A New Collection. By J. D. of Kidwelly.'

I have looked through the 'Epic-tetus Junior,' the 'Prudential Reflections,' the 'Political . . . Observations,' and other writings by John Davies. 'Political . . . Observations' seems to me to have

the very tone of 'Humane Prudence,' and on pages 11, 64, 88, 100, 111, and 122 of the tiny volume I find remarks which reappear in 'Humane Prudence' in a form not much different.

But even if we conclude that John Davies was the author of 'Humane Prudence,' it is quite likely that the *sixth* edition is the last which represents his manuscript. The next two or three editions may have been revised by no less a person than Sir Roger L'Estrange, a person whom every English journalist should feel an interest in. Indeed, on first comparing 'Humane Prudence' with other seventeenth-century writings, I was struck by the resemblance of the style of its later editions to that of several of the pamphlets of L'Estrange.

(I may note in passing that the statement on page 130 of this volume may or may not give help as to this question of authorship, according as it is a fact or an ideal statement, and according to the date at which it was actually *written*.)

There seem to me to be traces in 'Humane Prudence' of its being written or revised by someone who knew Lord Clifford or the Earl of Arlington, and L'Estrange certainly knew Arlington. I do not think that there is any sign that Martin Clifford had anything to do with 'Humane Prudence.' I may mention that *Sare*, its publisher, was treated as a friend by such men as L'Estrange; indeed, he wrote letters (about L'Estrange's private affairs) for L'Estrange which still exist.

But I think that, whether 'De Britaine' was John Davies or not, his ideas are worthy of preservation.

H. H. S.

June, 1897.

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SECTION I.

Of Study.



An intelligent and an industrious minority seldom fails of being followed by a virtuous and a useful life : you are now entering the theatre of the world, upon the stage of which every mortal must act a part. What yours may be, I know not ; but be it what it will, whether that of a statesman or of a beggar, it must be your care to pursue, with a good grace and a gallant bearing, the path that providence assigns you.

Never puzzle your head with the fantastic quirks of the schoolmen : as ‘how many angels can dance upon the point of a needle’ : or cudgel your brain about the proportion between the cylinder and the sphere,² though Archimedes highly valued himself upon having discovered it.

Neither will it become you to quarrel pedantically about the orthography of a word : as whether to write Felix with a diphthong, or an ‘e’ simple : but rather do you attend to the sense and meaning of

¹ Refers primarily to Edward Hungerford.—H. S.

² Archimedes, the greatest mathematician of antiquity, wrote a treatise ‘On the Sphere and Cylinder,’ which has come down to us. Proposition xxxvii. of the first book deals with the relation between a sphere and its circumscribing cylinder.—H. S.

things. What is it to us how many knobs Hercules had on his club, or whether Penelope was faithful or false? Let every man mind his own business, and do his own duty.

A wise man will employ his thoughts upon things substantial and useful. It is not meet for a man of the world, or even for a man of letters, to pester his brains with idle punctilios and disputed trifles; that superfine curious sort of learning amounts to little more than intellectual foppery, and serves no practical purpose. What are we the better for reading which furnishes us only with vague thoughts, leading to no action; or with vain learning, fit only for academic displays; or with knowledge of dead men's vices or follies, which may but do us harm?

Common sense is the treasure of the mind, and judgment is the key to its storehouse. It mixes well with all other gifts; even as diamonds enhance the hue of rubies or emeralds.

It ought to be a great part of our object and business in life at once to unlearn what we have been taught amiss, and to acquire the knowledge of better things. We must beware lest the errors or the mistakes of our education become ingrained in us; for early impressions are strong and lasting. Many of them grow up with us from the cradle, and some of them even follow us to the grave. That is the best knowledge, in short, that makes us useful rather than learned. Wisdom consists, in a great measure, in the governing of our appetites, and in the tuning of our affections. For when these are in harmony, both we and others profit by it.

Metaphysical speculations are but the spiderwork of whimsical heads. They are subtile and refined; but at the best, they may lead to pleasure without profit. Like a flower without a root, a fanciful philosophy is but a fading joy.

It was asked of Antisthenes,¹ what he gained by his learning? His answer was 'that it made him good company for himself, so that he was not beholden to others for society.' It is no small happiness for a man to rest quietly in his own house of life, and to entertain himself pleasantly with his own thoughts. To do this, you must add observation and experience to ability: practical knowledge is to theories, as travelling is to poring over a map.

The whole world is one great University; travel, observation of men and manners, and experience of action, are among its best lecturers.

Books give us our first notions of many things, and can contribute materials towards the structure of a beautiful palace of thought. But it is knowledge of the world which teaches us the possibilities of life, and shews us the order, importance, and connection of things, and gives us the credit of being judicious in our actions.

In any intellectual achievement to be first in time is a great advantage; for those that do similar things afterward, will get but a fraction of the praise given to him who led the way.

Hence it is that any part of philosophy penned by Hermes Trismegistus;² any script of geography bearing the name of Anaximander;³ any musical composition sung by Amphion to his harp;⁴ any piece of mathematical learning said to be written by Zoroaster;⁵ are popularly reputed to be invaluable because of their date.

¹ Founder of the Cynic school of philosophy.—H. S.

² Thoth, the scribe of the gods, to whom Greek authors attributed the writing of all the strictly sacred books, which they called 'Hermetic.'—H. S.

³ The Greek philosopher who is said to have invented geographical maps.—H. S.

⁴ Lyre.—H. S.

⁵ The founder of the national religion of the Perso-Iranian

4 *THE COUNSELS OF W. DE BRITAINE*

An illiterate person is a microcosm hidden in darkness, and is like a statue of Polyphemus with the eye chipped out.

I envy none that know more than myself, but I pity them that know less.

Nothing lends more dignity to a man of the world than learning, and no learning makes a man more judicious than that which comes from a study of history. A knowledge of history gives an antedate to time, brings experience without grey hairs, and makes us wise at the cost and expense of others, who thus lived and died as lessons for us.

Study well the volume of nature, which is of more worth than all the books in the universe; and it lies open to all too, though read by few and understood by fewer. To deal freely with you, I am not much concerned at the burning of Ptolemy's library at Alexandria; and I should not have been much more so, if I had actually seen its ashes; for a multitude of books is but a diverting distraction of the mind; whereas the treasury of nature entertains us with an inexhaustible variety of matter. Since the discovery of the use and virtue of the loadstone, there is nothing, methinks, that study and industry may not find out.

In matters that may be understood and that are fitted for our examination, application must be our oracle, and reason our Apollo. Not to know things out of our reach, is the imperfection not of our talent but of our nature, for mortal eyes cannot see beyond their horizon.

True knowledge values things by weight and measure, and not by the distinction of words and authorities. Truth is the tutelary saint of very few

people. This clause may be due to De Britaine's printer's error.—H. S.

persons, whereas erroneous opinions are current with all the rest of humanity.

Strive to excel; mediocrity is below a high soul; eminence in an honourable career will distinguish you from the crowd, and may even advance you into the catalogue of famous men. To be eminent among the obscure, is less than to be a humble part of the company of persons of weight and honour.

There was a man who presented to Henry the Great of France an anagram upon his name (Borbonius) which was Bonus Orbi, Orbus Boni; the King asked him what it meant. The man said, 'that when his Majesty was a Hugonot¹ he was Bonus Orbi; but when he turned Catholic he was Orbus Boni.' 'A very fine anagram,' said the King; 'and pray what profession are you of?' 'Please, your Majesty' (said the fellow) 'I am a maker of anagrams, but I am a very poor man.' 'I believe it, said the King, for you have taken up a beggarly trade.'

I would not have you like an odd-drapery hawker, who has many ends and remnants in his stock, but never one good length of stuff. A smatterer in many subjects is too often good for nothing with regard to any serious pursuit.

About a hundred and eighty years since,² the Greek language and necromancy were one and the same thing in the estimation of the common people: and it was not only disgraceful, but even dangerous to be a Greek scholar. Nevertheless, I have somewhat wondered, that Pope Paul the second,³ should declare them to be heretics, who uttered the word 'academy,' which signifies the seat of oracles and learning.

For myself, I shall ever have a singular regard for

¹ *Sic* De B.—H. S.

² That is, in the fifteenth century.—H. S.

³ Died 1471.—H. S.

6 THE COUNSELS OF W. DE BRITAINE

those who present any new invention or discovery to the Republic of Learning.

I honour Carpus, or those others whoever they were, who were the first discoverers of the medical efficacy of quick-silver;¹ they have thereby relieved more distressed persons, than if they had built many infirmaries or hospitals.

I much admire the rare invention of the microscope and telescope, and must pay my thanks to the authors of them (of whose identity antiquity gives us not the least hint). By the assistance of these dioptrical glasses, you may observe the curious mechanism and excellent contexture of the minutest animals, and that in these pretty engines (by an incomparable contraction of Providence) are lodged all the perfections of the largest creatures; so that were Aristotle now alive, he might write a new history of animals; for the first tome of zoography is still wanting, the naturalists hitherto having only described to us the larger and more voluminous sort of them, such as bears, bulls, tigers, etc., while they have regardlessly passed by the insectile automata, with a bare mention of their names.²

There is a new world of experiments left to the discovery of posterity; but it hath been the unhappy fate (which is a great pity) of novel inventions to be under-valued; witness that excellent discovery of Columbus, with the contempt he underwent, both before and after it.

And let nothing discourage you; worth is ever at home, and carrieth its own welcome along with it; your own talents will ennoble you, and he that has a great mind needs nothing to make him greater.

It is the ruin of many men, that because they

¹ Viz., the drug mercury.—H. S.

² I have left this interesting paragraph of De Britaine's almost unaltered.—H. S.

cannot be best, they will be nothing; and if they cannot do as well as they would, they will not do as well as they may.

Good-fortune is like the sellers in the markets; if you can wait a little, her prices will fall.

Let great actions encourage greater; and let honours be your rewards, not your objects, in life.



SECTION II.

*Of Religion.*¹



INK not yourself with fanatics, but join with Christians who agree to live soberly in a Communion that is not of yesterday.

Make not yourself either a party man, or a propounder of doctrines because they are in fashion. Value no teacher who has not probity and lives not up to some good rule of piety and justice. If sincerity does not make you prosperous it will at least keep you from being a snare; and no man can be truly religious, that is not also conscientiously just and honest. Now righteousness is the most powerful cause in the world, for God is on its side. Briefly, I wish the Christian world unity in the fundamentals that are necessary, liberty in things indifferent, and charity in all things.

I know that there have been many things obtruded upon the world as oracles of Heaven, that signify no more than cheats and impostures: but wise men ought not any longer to be concerned with shadows, since God hath said 'fiat Lux.'

I must confess, I have not faith enough myself to

¹ I am somewhat responsible for the general tone of this section. De Britaine's text contains in places a seventeenth-century narrowness of outlook.—H. S.

swallow camels, nor can I persuade my reason to become a dromedary to bear the whole luggage of tradition, or the fables of miracle-mongers.

Faith may exceed reason, but should not spurn it. My creed may be out of the reach of my senses, but it should not offer them any affront. Thus, while faith doth assure me that I receive Christ's grace effectually at the Holy Table, sense doth assure me that I see bread and taste it really. For though I oftentimes see not those things that I believe, yet I must still believe those things that I see.

I can pay no reverence to a gray-headed error: and as antiquity cannot privilege a mistake, so novelty cannot prejudice truth.

There is nothing in itself more excellent than religion; but to raise quarrels and disputes about it, is to dishonour it. It is marvellous to me, that that which was designed to make us happy in another world, should by its divisions make us most miserable in this; and that what was ordained for the saving of men's souls should be perverted into the taking away of their lives. I do not like a creed, that, like Draco's laws, is writ in blood.

I never was disaffected to any that were of a different persuasion from me in point of religion, but wished them liberty of conscience, so far as they made a conscience of that liberty; and I never understood the logic of confirming a wavering faith by sword and pistol. I never was so rigid a censor as to condemn all those which were not within the purview of a particular church; for my charity hopes for a reserve of God's mercy, even for the very Pagans themselves.

I never affected any schism, that being against a main article of my faith, viz. the Communion of Saints, which makes the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant one body.

I never idolized the theorems of the schools ; but I must confess that 'unum Augustinum mille Patribus, unam Sacræ Scripturæ paginam mille Augustinis præfero.' I value St. Augustine more than a thousand of the fathers, and one simple page of Holy Writ more than a thousand St. Augustines.

That religion to me seemeth best which is most reasonable ; especially if we consider how much of self-interest there is, and what strong impressions from early education there are, in that which many call religion. Not that we are to try the articles of our creed by the touchstone of Aristotle.

Be content with a single-minded faith in God, the comforts of a good life, and the hopes of a better one upon true repentance, and take the Apostles' creed as your vademecum of theology.

In things essential agree with the mass of Christians ; in things indifferent, with the best parson you wot of. Though you have some beliefs and notions of your own, yet yield (as the Orbs do for the order of the Universe) to the great wheel of the Christian Church.

Let it be an article of your faith, to believe as the first Christians believed ; and have it as the great principle of your practice, to live as the Golden Rule directs. A sound faith is the best divinity ; a good conscience the best law, and temperance the best physic.

Let not your faith, which ought to stand firm upon The Sure Foundation, lean foolhardily upon some well painted but rotten prop of earthly device.

If in Scripture some points are left unto us less clear and positive than others, be not dismayed, it is that Christians may have reason to exercise humility in themselves, and charity towards others.

Never wrest¹ the Scripture to maintain what you

¹ Cf. Psalm lvi. 6.—H. S.

believe to be true, for fear lest such a habit should bring you in time to wrest it to serve what you know to be an error.

Be careful not to exasperate any sect or school of thought ; rigour seldom makes ill Christians better, but many times it makes them reserved hypocrites.

Zeal doth well in a private breast, but moderation suits a public position better. Set bounds to your zeal by discretion, to errors by truth, to passions by reason, to divisions by charity.

Never contend passionately for ceremonies (which are but the suburbs of religion) to the disquiet of the church : it is better for the church to be without some ornaments than to lack charity or peace.

‘*Optimus animus est pulcherrimus Dei cultus.*’ If you design to make yourself happy, look to your thoughts before they come to desires, and entertain no thoughts which you would blush to put into words.

The best way to keep out wicked thoughts is always to be occupied with good ones ; let your thoughts be where your duty is, and let your heart be where your thoughts are ; for, though your work is upon Earth, it can be done as within sight of Heaven.

Let your thoughts be such that you need not be ashamed to remember that God knows them ; and your words to God such as you need not be ashamed if men could hear.

It was one of the utterances of Pythagoras, ‘*de deo loqui sine lumine nefas esto*’: I must confess that I cannot think of God without an ecstasy, or speak of Him without a reverence.¹

If your endeavours cannot ward off a fault, let a

¹ The reader may like to be reminded of passages, somewhat similar to this, which he will find in Sir Thomas Browne’s ‘*Religio Medici*,’ section iii.—H. S.

timely repentance follow it ; with the same height of desire with which thou hast sinned, with the like depth of sorrow thou shouldest repent. Thou that hast sinned to-day, defer not thy repentance till to-morrow. For He that hath promised pardon to thy amendment, hath not promised thee life until thou hast amended.

Make use of time if thou lovest Eternity ; know that yesterday cannot be recalled, and that to-morrow is not assured to thee ; to-day only is thine, a jewel which if once lost is lost for ever, lost to God, lost to men, lost to and by thee.

Let all your actions be 'a Deo, in Deo, ad Deum': never venture on any action unless you bring God to it ; nor rest satisfied, unless you carry God from it.

Be assured, he hath no serious belief in God, or in a life to come, who dares to be wicked.

Instead of a Cato, set before you a God, whose eye is always upon you ; and therefore keep your eye always turned reverently toward Him.

Fear to do anything against that God whom thou lovest, and thou wilt not love to do anything against that God whom thou fearest.

Let your prayers be as many as your wants, and your thanksgivings as frequent as your blessings.

In the morning think what you have to do during the day ; and ask God's blessing upon your projects. At night, think of all that you have done, and for its imperfections ask God's pardon.

Take an exact account of your life, be not afraid to look upon the score of your sins, but be fearful to increase it ; for a man to despair because he has been a sinner, is for him to add error and folly to wickedness.

If the devil shall at any time tempt thee to evil, betake thyself to wholesome toil after fervent prayer, and then he will forbear to tempt thee any more,

when he shall see that he thereby urges thee but toward devotion and toward duty.

Have a care of the least temptation to sin which may attack thee; for the most heroic virtue is like a great city, in that it is seldom skilfully besieged, without being taken in the end.

Consider, that in Heaven above there is an ear which overhears you, an eye which oversees you, and a book wherein all your words and deeds are carefully written; therefore so behave yourself in every action as if God were on the one hand, and death on the other.

In all your actions aim at Christian perfection; that man will fall, sooner or later, who suffers himself to cherish one sinful thought.

And he that dares sometimes to do base acts because they are for his advantage, would become utterly base, if he thought that his interests allowed of it. '*Quod dubitas, ne feceris.*'

Let thy property serve thy affairs, let thy affairs serve thyself; let thyself serve thy soul, let thy soul serve thy God.

Be not solicitous about fame, for that lies within the reach of many if they raised a hand to it; but do thou take care of conscience, which is a plain task, a commission within the capacity of all, and yet one in which most men fail.

Consider time past, as matter for recollection and reflection; time present as owed to duty; and time to come as left to Providence. Your time is a rich part of the public treasure; every hour of it which you mis-spend is a sacrilegious theft, and a crime committed against your fellow-citizens.

Consider the shortness of your life, and the certainty of judgment to come; the great reward there will be for the good, and the severe lesson for the bad; therefore make peace with Heaven by repen-

tance at the end of every day, and so you shall have but one day to repent of on your deathbed.

You may have all the wisdom of the world, and all knowledge of tongues and languages; but if you are not ruled by the maxims of a good heart and a righteous conscience, 'tis but '*sapienter ad Infernum descendere*.'

Religion lies not so much in the creed as in the life; it is of no avail to talk like Christians, if we live like vicious infidels; this it was that made a famous Pagan philosopher say 'that there was nothing more glorious than a Christian in his discourse, nothing more miserable in his actions.'

He that serves God is free, safe, and calm; all his actions will bear such fruit as God wills; and what can a man desire more than to want little from without, and to have all things necessary for eternal happiness within himself?

Therefore, i. Be careful that you be always employed, ii. Look to the issue, iii. Reflect upon yourself. '*Vita est in se reflectio*': beams in reflection are hottest, and the soul becomes wise by walking in the ways of God.

In the morning I frequently converse with the dead, at noon with the living, at night with myself; yet I do not trouble my head with over much reading of books. For when I contemplate the great volume of the universe, in every page of it I observe such excellent theorems and maxims of wisdom, that for the nonce I am weary of the printed page.

And yet methinks I could ill spare one approved author from my library.



SECTION III.

Of Loyalty.

EXT to speaking of your duty to God, I come to give you advice with regard to your loyalty to your sovereign.

Never sell honour to purchase treason. A secure and happy subjection is more to be esteemed than a dangerous and factious liberty.

A strong rule is the greatest security of freedom; for as the obedience of his subjects is the source of a king's power, so the royal power is the safeguard of national liberty. Therefore those who weaken a sovereign's power, usually weaken a nation's security.

Never suffer the dignity of the royal person to be lowered; for the disastrous result of a subject's disobedience, is, by first sullyng the glory of the king's person, to end in the overthrow of his power.

As rebellion is a weed of hasty growth, it will probably decay as suddenly; and that band which is united by treachery, will easily be dissolved by jealousies. Political crimes are full of fears, delays, and frequent change of counsels; and that which in the projection seemed sure of its reward, when it comes to be acted looks black with danger.

All disloyal persons would do well to consider, that when those who employed them have accomplished their impious purpose, they will either disdain their instruments as useless, or destroy them as dangerous.

Charles the fifth, during the quarrel between the Imperialists and the French, made use of the Duke of Bourbon (who by his infidelity, had purchased the hatred of men) against his Lord and Master, Francis the first. After the arrival of the Duke at

the Emperor's Court, Cæsar, having entertained him with all friendly demonstrations, sent to one of his nobles and asked him for his house to lodge Bourbon in. The nobleman answered the messenger, with Castilian courage, that he could not but grant his master's request ; but 'let him know (saith he) that Bourbon shall no sooner be gone out of the house, but I will burn it, as being infected with his treason and infamy and thereby made unfit for men of honour to dwell in.'

He that entertains a dangerous design, puts his head into a halter ; and, moreover, he puts that halter into the hands of the person to whom he first imparts the secret.

And events¹ have assured us, that the people, after they have seen the evils which they have brought about by their own folly, will return that power which they gained by their rebellion (but could not manage) to its proper place, before it becomes their ruin ; for they will see that unbounded liberty must destroy itself.

And, let me tell you, the objects of the common people, however skilfully painted by those who in public do swear by such folk as though they were very angels, are much different from the designs of any wise statesman. So that we should remember that mankind is highly concerned in the supporting of sound government, wherein the safety of honest citizens most consists, and that we ought to confound those arts by which the ruin of a good king is contrived.

Submission to your sovereign is your duty, and the open expression of confidence in his goodness will show your prudence.

¹ Viz., the Restoration. The reader may compare with this pages 25-27 of De Britaine's pamphlet, 'The Dutch Usurpation, etc., 1672.'—H. S.

Whatsoever a sovereign doth, it is to be presumed by his subjects that it was done with great reason ; if he commands anything, everyone is bound to believe that he hath good reason to command the same. His actions are manifest, but his thoughts are secret ; it is our duty to submit to the former, and not to speculate concerning the latter. For the books of kings are written in strange characters, which few can decipher ; and their actions are like some great river, whereof we see the dark surface move, but know not its sources nor what underlies the depths of the water.

The commands of princes are not to be disputed but obeyed : do not pry into the reasons of what is commanded, but act because it is commanded and in the manner directed. Let no pretence of a tender conscience render you disobedient to a ruler's lawful commands ; for righteous obedience to your king, is part of your duty towards God.

Remember that conscience is not your master, but your guide ; and so far only can conscience justify your actions, as it is itself justified by the laws of God.

I have seen loyalty suffer punishment due to rebellion, and treason receive the rewards of fidelity ; yet for all that I choose to be loyal, and to force my passage to the help of my prince, though the way be paved with thorns and serpents.

A loyal subject, like a good soldier, will stand his ground, receive wounds, and glory in his scars. Yea, and in death itself he will love the master for whom he falls. He will have this divine precept always in his mind, ' Fear God, honour the King.'


And they that would be traitors to a king should ever be forewarned that princes have a myriad eyes that observe for them on their right side and on

their left ; and that royal arms are long and can strike offenders from afar. When they strike from a short way off, woe to the culprit !



SECTION IV.

*Of Conversation.*¹

HE love of society is instinctive ; but the character of our company is largely a matter of our own choice, which therefore needs to be exercised according to prudence.

Any assemblage of wise men is a kind of academy of good-breeding and learning : it was not the school, but the company of Epicurus that made Metrodorus, Harmactius and Polyænus so famous.

To hear the discourse of wise men delights us, and their company inspires us with noble and generous contemplations. When I happen to come into the society of two or three wise men, I think myself as fortunate as if I were in the Lycium² of Aristotle, or the Stoa of Zeno.

Let your conversation therefore be with those by whose example you may profit most ; for the ship of character never returns with so rich a cargo as when it sets sail from such continents. Company, like climates, alters temperament ; and ill company, by a kind of contagion, doth insensibly affect us. Yielding and tender natures are but too apt to receive any impression ; Alexander learned his drunkenness

¹ Used in the sense in which Philip Gilbert Hamerton used the phrase 'Human Intercourse' as the title of one of his two most interesting books.—H. S.

² Less correctly 'Lyceum.'—H. S.

from Leonides, and Nero his cruelty from his barber.

I dare not trust myself in the hands of bad company ; indeed I feel that I never go abroad so as to come home again absolutely the same man that I went out, something or other that I had in the order of my mind is discomposed ; perchance even some passion that I had subdued lifts its head again. But I dare not for long abstain from human intercourse lest my mind lose some of its strength. The mind suffers from seclusion somewhat as the body does ; after a man has kept his chamber for a long time, he is grown tender, and the least breath of a ruder air affects him.

Keep company with persons rather above than beneath yourself ; for gold, if placed in the same pocket with silver, loseth somewhat both of its colour and of its weight. But be careful that you do not entangle your affairs with those of great men who have grown desperate, for the fall of such may be ruinous even to their most prudent followers. Wise birds build not in tall trees unless the timber be sound.

Men of large souls, and narrow fortunes, are not suited to be your daily companions. Rare powers seldom bless their owners with moderation, their friends with happiness, or the place they live in with peace.

Eat no cherries with great men, for they will cast the stones in your eyes ; like fire, at a distance they give warmth ; but if you go too near them, you may be burned.

He is wise, or will soon become so, who keeps wise company : but he that lieth with dogs (saith a homely proverb) riseth with fleas. Retain your own virtues, and by imitation naturalize other men's ; but let no man become a pattern to you until you are

sure that he is well made and of good stuff: study to gain respect, not by little observances, but by constant courtesy, kindly intentions, and honourable dealing.

Hear no ill of a friend, and speak as little as possible of an enemy: believe not all that you hear, nor speak all that you believe. Say what is well, and do what is better; be what you appear to be, and appear to be what you are.

Approve yourself to wise men by your character, and please the crowd by your courtesy.

Permit not your disposition to grow tart, even though you be on the lees of fortune; for bitter words, like hot drinks, are useful upon occasion, but if often used are injurious. Be of a quiet and serene deportment.

Give not your advice or opinion before it is wished for, seeing that that is to upbraid the other's ignorance, and to value your own ability over much: neither accustom yourself to find fault with other men's actions, for you are not bound to weed the gardens of their activity.

Be not contradictory; contradiction passes for an affront, because it is the condemning of the judgment or of the knowledge of another; and by offering much of it, you may sour the sweetest companionship.

Distrust an inquisitive man as probably a fool, and possibly a spy; for some persons who are forward in asking, use the same liberty in telling. Questions from cunning men often smell of danger, for their questions are (like beggars' gifts, '*Sua munera misit in hamo*,' which are only produced in order to draw forth something in return) intended to betray you into yielding up what you should not part with. And you will meet with men whose ears are like cupping-glasses; for as these attract the most

noxious humours in the body so the former ever absorb the worst sayings of their companions.

In society do you rather incline to listen than to speak: for you will then have this advantage, that what is beneficial in the talk, you may make your own, and may the more readily discard what is false or worthless.

Avoid too much familiarity in conversation, for he that familiarizes himself, soon loses the superiority that his serious air first gave him. The more common things are, the less they are valued; and familiarity uncovers imperfections that reservedness concealed.

Be not too familiar with superiors, for fear of giving offence, nor with inferiors, for that is indecent. Above all, preserve your dignity of manner with persons of coarse fibre; for their ignorance of mental and moral differences is such, that, being insensible of the honour done them by your notice, they will take the attention which you graciously give as but their due. There is no better defence against those who would pick the lock of the heart, than to turn the key of reserve on the inside.

Never commend a worthy person to his face, but do it judiciously to others, to create in them a good opinion of him. Do not dispraise a bad man behind his back, but do it to himself, if you think that it will work a reformation in him.

Glowing encomiums of any person, uttered in his absence, are not over prudent, for they suggest a kind of detraction of those with whom you are talking; and such praisings will suggest a certain arrogance in you; for he that commends another, often appears to wish him to be well esteemed merely upon the speaker's recommendation.

Nothing will gain you more reputation with the mass of men, than an humble and serene deportment.

A rude or morose behaviour in social intercourse, is as absurd, as the name of a 'round quadrangle' would be to a mathematician.

Urbanity and civility are a debt which you owe to mankind ; civil language and good behaviour will be like perpetual letters-commendatory unto you. Other virtues have need of somewhat to maintain them ; justice, for example, must have power ; liberality needs wealth ; and so forth. But courtesy sets up in business with no other stock than a few pleasant looks and good words, and an absence of evil intention. It is a good bargain to gain true friends at the cost of sincere kindness and affability.

Pyrrhus, being warned by the Romans to beware of poison, since one of his own subjects was believed to have a design to dispatch him, did then begin to fear that he should come to an end by the hands of those who had already subdued him by their civil words.

Hence it was that the magnanimous Don Alphonso,¹ King of Naples, by forgetting his greatness for a moment and alighting from his horse to relieve a countryman that was in some danger, conquered the fortified walls of Gaëta, which the battery of his guns could not have done in many days ; he made his first entry in their hearts, and presently afterward entered in triumph into their city.

The crowd is as easily moved in its affections, as it is furious in its persecutions : the first thing that gets its love (after flattery) is courtesy and generosity. Agesilaus being asked how one might get the love of men, answered, by speaking them fair, and doing them favours.

Let your behaviour, like your garments, be neither tight nor loose, but fit and becoming.

¹ Otherwise Alfonso V. (the Wise), King of Aragon. The date of the surrender was 1453.—H. S.

Catch not too soon at an offered slight, neither give way too quickly to anger; the one shews a weak pride, and the other an ungoverned nature.

In conversation, avoid idle jests and vain compliments; the one being 'crepitus ingenii,' the other nothing but verbal idolatry; distinction, like a rich stone, is ever seen best when plain set.

Anacharsis being invited to a feast, could not be prevailed upon to smile at the affected railleries of common jesters; but when an ape was brought in he laughed freely, saying that 'An ape was ridiculous by nature, but men ought not to become so by study.'¹

Be not of those who commence witty conversation by blasphemy, and deem that they cannot be ingenious but by being impious.

To bandy idle jests, is to sojourn in the suburbs of vanity, and to delight in them, is to dwell in the city of fools. By endeavouring to purchase the reputation of being witty, you may soon lose the advantage of being thought to be wise.

An advocate pleading in the senate, and using many jests, Pleistarchus said to him, 'Sir, you do not consider that as those that wrestle are² wrestlers at last, so you, by often exciting laughter, will become ridiculous yourself.'

Jests must be used, like physic, in moderation, for they lose their effect if they are too frequently employed. If your jests, like mustard, be biting, as you make others afraid of your wit, so you had need be afraid of their memory. Wit is but a half-brother to wisdom; sometimes wit is nothing but wisdom scared out of its wits.³

¹ This answer, if not that of Anacharsis, is clearer than the one quoted by De B. Anacharsis was a Scythian traveller and philosopher.—H. S.

² Often become professional wrestlers.—H. S.

³ Probably a reference to the laboured playing upon words, which so often passed for wit in De Britaine's day.—H. S.

Never distort your face or your words to express incivility or fantastic nonsense, nothing doth more depreciate or degrade a man's dignity in conversation. This folly is handsomely derided in an old blunt epigram, where the fantastic gentleman thus speaks to his foot-boy :

'Diminutive, and my defective slave,
Reach my corps coverture immediately ;
'Tis my complacency that vest to have,
T' insconce my person from frigidity.'

The boy thought all was Welsh that his master said ; until he called in English, 'Rogue, go fetch my cloke to keep me warm.'

Use such words, as those to whom you speak will understand ; otherwise you will be as ridiculous as Andrew Downes (Greek professor¹ at Cambridge) who courted his mistress out of the Thesaurus² of H. Stephanus. I pity that person who never speaks but in monosyllables, like Rabelais' grey friar.

You will meet with many persons, (as I myself have done) who are grave in bearing, and exceedingly formal ; but they are so far from solving of riddles as Oedipus³ did, that they are very riddles themselves. You must have a care of these, for a pedant and a formalist are two dangerous animals ; but to the sages and heroes of the times, out of duty, you must pay the debt of an honourable regard and remembrance.

If you meet with a person subject to infirmities,

¹ From 1585 to 1625. He was a Biblical translator, and a writer on Demosthenes, etc. He wrote Greek letters to Isaac Casaubon.—H. S.

² The Greek Thesaurus of Henri Estienne, called in De Britaine's text 'Henry Stephens.' Downes' copy was very likely of the 1572 folio edition.—H. S.

³ It may be interesting to note that Dryden and Lee's tragedy of 'Oedipus' was published in 1679.—H. S.

never deride them in him, but bless God that you have no occasion to grieve for them in yourself.

You may see your own mortality in other men's deaths, and your own frailty in their sins.

Nothing doth more cultivate and embellish a man than the companionship of the wise; man is born barbarous, and is ransomed from the condition of beasts only by being cultivated.

To mature yourself, frequent the society of the most sage and excellent persons: but when you are matured, strike in with those of the inferior size; for the former will eclipse the lustre of your abilities. The most accomplished of men will always have the first rank; and if you get any part of the world's praise, it will be their leavings. It will be imprudent for you to gain credit for others, at the expense of your own reputation.

It is one good step towards true happiness to delight in the society of wise and good men; where that cannot be had, it is almost advisable to keep no company at all.

A cat, out of pretended kindness, came one day to visit a sick hen, and asked her how she did; the hen answered, 'the better if you were farther off'; do you, after the same manner, treat all idle and vain persons. For such men, like a vitiated digestion, corrupt whatsoever they receive. Thus that which ought to yield nourishment is made to do harm.

I do not desire to open my heart, like the gates of a foolish city, to all that ask to enter; guests that would tarry there, must prove that I should do well to admit them.

The Assyrians assert that Mercury is the ruling planet of young men; and the reason is, as I conceive, because that planet bodes good or ill according to the planet with which it is in conjunction.

Be free from all manner of oddities and particular humours, they being not acceptable to society: for who would not mislike the temperament of a Demophon,¹ who vowed that he perspired in the shadow, and trembled for cold in the sun.

Be 'Orpheus in silvis, inter delphines Arion': I would advise all those that are of a severe or morose temperament, to sacrifice to the Graces without ceasing until their malady is lessened.



SECTION V.

*Of Discourse.*²

DISCOURSE is 'vehiculum cogitationum'; therefore it should run even with the wheels of men's thoughts. It ought to be discreet, and not a mere idle chiming of inanities.

It may be said that silence is the wisdom of a fool, and speech that of a wise man. The Rabbis observe, with regard to various places in Scripture, that the word which is translated 'speak' signifies thinking as well as speaking; to teach us, that we ought to think before we speak, and not to speak otherwise than as we think.

If the turret-clock of the tongue be not set by the sun-dial of the heart, it will not go right.

Before you speak, dip your tongue in your mind, and then you will mind what you speak. A wise man hath his tongue held fast by his mind, but a

¹ Or Demophoon, doubtless the King of Athens of that name, B.C. 1182.—H. S.

² Viz., speech. As will be seen in this section, the word is chiefly used by De Britaine for talk in which each person delivers himself at some length.—H. S.

fool hath what he calleth his mind loose upon his tongue.

Never speak in superlatives, for that way of speaking always hurts either truth or prudence.

Let your discourse be such as your judgment may maintain, and as your companions deserve; by neglecting the one rule you waste your discourse, by not observing the other you lose your opportunity.

Discourse, like weather, is best liked in its proper season.

A polite and lucid discourse charms the ears; but sublime metaphysical conceptions make those that hear them do penance; and the discourse of some men resembles the stars, which give us little light, because they are so high. I approve not of those Boëotian enigmas, or Delphic oracles; they are fit only for an Apollo.

Hear more often than you speak, and be willing to learn of others rather than to show yourself a teacher. It is many men's fault, rather to exhibit their old wares, than to purchase new stuff. I had rather be a commonplace book, to take the wise sayings and discourses of others, than I would have every word of mine esteemed as an oracle.

A prudent man keeps his eyes open, and his mouth mostly shut; for he knows that it is his business to inform himself, rather than to attempt to instruct others. The wise man often retires within the sanctuary of his silence; and if sometimes he be communicative it is but to a few persons, men whom he accounts to be wise.

Never argue against the truth, but be jealous to be her champion, or at the least to wear her colours; he that argues against the truth takes pains only to be overcome at the last; even if he be a conqueror for a time, he gains but fading trophies by his victory.

I have heard two men arguing so passionately one against the other that each of them lost charity, and at the last, both of them lost hold of truth: there are few disputes carried on without some show of passion, and yet there is scarce any dispute worth the appearance of passion.

Let your discourse be smooth, and flowing like a river; not turbulent, nor impetuous, like a torrent.

If there be any need of your contending, let it be done with respect, and in such a manner as to set forth your opinion fairly; do not magisterially, and in a style of authority, strive to enforce it. Give your opinions as the Romans did, '*ita videtur, ita appareth so to me*'; for men are not easily convinced of anything by others discoursing imperiously.

In discourse make not too great a flourish or scattering of your knowledge, lest your treasury be soon exhausted. Some good thing should be kept in store, that you may bring it forth to-morrow; the skilful host furnishes no more dishes at an Ordinary than are necessary to satisfy his guests.

Never talk or discourse of anything that lies beyond the sphere of your intellect, or that is outside of your knowledge, otherwise you may render yourself ridiculous, and not even know it.

‘*Navita de ventis, de tauris narret arator;
Enumeret miles vulnera, pastor oves.*’

There was a gentleman that had an aching in his head, which did much afflict him; he consulted a doctor of physic, and the gentleman told the doctor that he had a friend (who was but a quack), but because he was much beholden to him, and unwilling to disoblige him, desired that he might be sent for, and consult together about his distemper; to which the doctor did willingly agree; the quack being

sent for, came, and being informed what the doctor had prescribed, after some impertinent discourse, he told the doctor he was much mistaken in the distemper; the doctor asked him what he took the distemper to be, the quack told him it was enteritis.¹

I had a neighbour, by profession a tailor, who was much abused with ill language by another person; the tailor was resolved to sue him, and came to his lawyer and declared to him how he had been abused; the lawyer asked him 'what were the words that he spake of you?' 'Sir,' said the tailor, 'he called me a serpent.' 'A good action will lie,' said the counsel. 'I know that,' said the tailor, 'very well, but I would have a *Scandalum Magnatum*,² for the words are of a high nature; and I have heard that the jury usually give great damages in that action.'

These two persons had their brains under the same control as that gentleman, who being asked what the *Bucentaur*³ was, answered that it was the Duke of Venice.

Discourse is the scheme by which you may take the ascendent of the understanding.⁴

Forbear all sarcasms and satirical speeches, for they may be remembered by others when they are forgotten by him that spake them. The Earl of

¹ I have revised this paragraph, and the next, as little as possible. They may serve the purpose of shewing the reader, who has not seen the text of *De Britaine's* book, something of its style: but some of the anecdotes are in a much more involved style than these are.—H. S.

² The writ for recovering damages, and the action, acquired the name of the offence, which was that of libelling any peer or great officer of the realm.—H. S.

³ The state barge of the doges of Venice.—H. S.

⁴ 'Scheme' in this paragraph, which I leave unaltered, is the '*Schema Cœli*,' the chart of the sky at a particular moment, so dear to the astrologer. 'Ascendent,' as an astrological term, is defined in an old dictionary as 'that degree of the Ecliptic which rises at one's nativity.'—H. S.

Essex told Queen Elizabeth that she was as crooked in disposition as she was in body; she never forgot those words, and the Earl lost his head for them in the end.

As an Italian says, 'though the tongue has no bone, yet many times it breaks the back.' 'Vincula da linguæ, vel tibi vincula dabit'; confine your tongue, or else it will confine you.

Be not aimless or long-winded in talking; that may create a fool's paradise, but it makes a wise man's purgatory; it will suggest a certain weakness of character in you, and may imply a belief on your part that others are affected with the same vanity.

Great talkers discharge too many bolts to take always true aim, 'qui pauca considerat, facile pronuntiat.' To speak well and to speak much is not a task for any but rare persons. Much speaking is too often weary hearing.

Speak wisely, or say nothing; then if others be not profited by your silence, they will not be vexed by your discourse. By your silence you have this advantage, you observe other men's mistakes, and avoid making errors of your own; not that I would have you over-reserved, that is a symptom of a base nature, and a habit unwelcome in any good society.

But let your speech have some weight, and let it not be like a ship that hath more sail than ballast. Let reason be the pillar of your discourse, and ideas the windows that give the best lights.

Your wit may make clear things doubtful, but it shows your prudence better to use it to make doubtful things clear. And remember that a light may guide, where a blaze would only dazzle.

There is no man that you hear talk, from whom you may not gain something, if you be wise; and there is no man that is silent, by whose silence you may not lose something, if you are not careful.

In a company talking it is good to listen to others at first, for silence in this case hath much the same effect as authority; it procures a kind of respect for your words when they come.

Demades the orator,¹ in his day was a very talkative person, and a great eater; Antipater used to say of him, 'that he was like a sacrifice: that nothing was left of him but the tongue and the paunch.'

Be assured, he that delights in speaking much, and listens to little, will give others more information than he will get in return. I consider that I have sense enough to hold my tongue, but not enough knowledge to make a good talker.

'Parca lingua, aperta frons, et clausum pectus,' are the best ingredients of wisdom; and those words suggested the saying of a great Italian, 'keep your thoughts shut, and your countenance open.'

Be not dictatorial, nor too positive, in any assertion, for the bold maintaining of any argument, doth somewhat risk your own civil behaviour; modesty in your discourse will give a lustre to truth and extenuate any error that you may make.

If you desire to know how short your understanding comes in high things, consider how little you know of yourself, what the soul is, or of what members your body is inwardly compacted; or what is the use of every bone, vein, artery, or sinew, which no man understands, as Galen himself confesseth.

Protagoras hath delivered to us, 'that there is nothing in nature, but doubt; and that a man may equally dispute of all things; and of that also, whether all things may be equally disputed of.'

I do pay much reverence to the humility of Plato, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and all the

¹ An Athenian statesman.—H. S.

Academic philosophers, who positively maintained, 'that nothing in the world can be certainly known.'

And Socrates was by the oracle adjudged the wisest man living, because he was wont to say 'I know only this, that I know nothing'; yet Arcesilaus was of opinion, that not so much as that could be known, which Socrates said he knew, to wit, that he knew nothing.

Therefore I never trouble myself with speculations as to the height of the heavens, nor as to the magnitude of the earth, whether the sun (as Anaxamenes thought) be as flat as a trencher, or whether it be hunch-backed underneath like a cockboat (as Heraclitus held): I never disturb my head with the dimensions of the moon, to know whether she be hung loose in the air, or whether she be inhabited or not; whether the stars be but earth luminated, as Thales maintained, or whether perfect fire, as Plato thought; I leave nature to itself, and think it sufficient to know who is its author, and to give God thanks as I am able.¹



SECTION VI.

Of Silence and Secrecy.



JUPITER having conceived some displeasure against mortals upon earth, caused an army to be raised against them; and when it was raised, there was a great squabble as to who should command it; some were for Mercury, others for Mars; but as they could not agree, they acquainted Jupiter with the difficulty; Jupiter told them that he would have none of them,

¹ I have left this interesting passage almost unaltered.—H. S.

that silence should be his general. And indeed secrecy and celerity are the two poles upon which all great actions move ; and the noblest designs are like a gunpowder mine, in that they are wholly frustrate and of no effect, if there is an opening to the common air.

Hence it was that Pythagoras enjoined upon his scholars a quinquennial silence, that they might learn to meditate, and unlearn to talk ; and this was their first lesson in wisdom ; after they were grown learned in silence, then they were allowed to speak.

He who offends by speech seems to offend deliberately, while he who offends by silence appears to offend accidentally. In matters of consequence, ‘*qui silet est firmus*’ ; a silent man walks in the dark, and is rather to be guessed at than known, ‘*sapiens semper in se reconditur*.’

The Venetians in their senate, which consists of three hundred nobles, manage their affairs with such admirable secrecy, that they appear in public as if none of them knew what was being done, or as if they had power to forget whatsoever they had heard. So that ambassadors sent to Venice ought to be men of the greatest sagacity, because they have to treat as it were with dumb people, and have to understand everything as if it were conveyed to them by signs.

So that among the Venetians silence is no less venerable than amongst the Persians, where it was esteemed a deity. And indeed secrecy is the key of prudence, and the sanctuary of wisdom.

I never do more penance than when I have communicated a secret to another ; ‘before I told you of this,’ said Charles the fifth, speaking of a design of his to his favourite Lunenburgh, ‘I was an Emperor, but now you are so.’

The answer of the Italian, who had published a

libel against Pope Sixtus, was witty. His Holiness being extremely offended at the libel, had promised a considerable sum to any person that should find out the author; some days being past without hearing any news thereof, they found words to this effect written at the bottom of the Pasquil:¹ ‘Most Holy Father, you shall never know it; when I made it, I was alone.’

‘Nulli crede unquam, quod tu clam feceris:’ he that makes others privy-councillors in such cases, may pass for a prodigy of folly.

He that says all he knows, will generally add what he knoweth not.

‘Fingere qui non visa potest commissa tacere
Qui nequit, hic niger est, hunc tu (Romane) caveto.’

A foolish and talkative person is certainly no well-tuned cymbal: be thou like a spring-lock, readier to shut than to open. And if a man be thought reserved, it inviteth enquiry, as a thick hedge suggesteth a rich garden.

Never communicate that which it may injure your concerns to mention and will not benefit your friend to know.

Pretend not to understand those affairs which your sovereign wishes to keep secret; there is nothing that will so soon create a prejudice against you, and it may perhaps end in your ruin.

The Duke of Anjou, having gathered from Charles the Ninth of France that king’s design of extirpating the Hugonots² on St. Bartholomew’s Day, communicated it to one of his gentlemen. The king happen-

¹ ‘Pasquillo’ and ‘Pasquinata’ denote the libel itself; ‘Pasquino’ is the name of the defaced statue at Rome upon which such libellous placards were stuck.—H. S.

² This spelling is interesting, perhaps even it shows which derivation of the word the writer favoured.—H. S.

ing to discourse with that gentleman in private, the latter let fall an allusion to the secret ; His Majesty was much surprised at this, and presently caused this gentleman to be killed as he was hunting, conceiving no other way of preserving a secret of such great importance, one which the Duke had so inconsiderately revealed.

He that trusts another with a secret, makes himself a slave, but if he is a great person he will not tolerate the position long ; for men in such a case are impatient to redeem their lost liberty.

Seleucus,¹ surnamed Callinicus, a valiant prince, being discomfited in battle, was driven to break his royal diadem, and to join company with three of his men, that he might not be known. After he had wandered awhile in the desert, he chanced upon a small cottage, where he asked for a little bread and some water, to the end that his rank might not be discovered ; his host shewed him all the kindness and courtesy which in him lay, well knowing that he was the king, and then set him in the way that he wished to go. Now the fellow would certainly have been nobly rewarded for his acts, had not his talkative tongue marred his market ; for when the king, departing, said, ‘ Farewell, mine host,’ the man answered, ‘ God keep you, my liege.’ Whereat the king being much troubled, and fearing to be betrayed by the indiscretion of his host, ordered one of his men to cut off the fellow’s head.

As it is not prudent to wish to learn a secret of state, so in many cases it may ruin him that heard it if he reveal it.

When King Lysimachus professed great kindness unto Philippides the comedian,² and asked of him

¹ The Second, King of Syria.—H. S.

² Athenian comic poet.—H. S.

what he should give to him ; ‘ anything that pleases your Majesty,’ said Philippides, ‘ except a secret.’

I am not for making windows into men’s hearts, or prying into the cabinets of their privacies. It was smartly replied by the Egyptian, when one asked him what he had in his basket ; ‘ cum vides velatum, quid inquiris in rem absconditam ?’

I would not have any man enter into my secrets without my leave. It is but common civility to stand aside when a man is reading letters, or engaged in any private interview. Cardinal Richelieu had a great esteem for a certain young man, and began to entrust him with some of his affairs ; but having on one occasion found the lad reading some papers which he had left upon his table, he would never afterwards employ him.

On one occasion Alexander was reading a letter which he had received from his mother, containing mention of secret matters, and accusations of Antipater ; Hephæstion also (as he was wont) was reading it with him. Alexander allowed him to read on, but when he had read it, Alexander took his signet-ring off his finger, and laid it upon Hephæstion’s mouth ; meaning thereby, that he to whom a secret is entrusted, ought always to keep his mouth shut upon it.

‘ He makes himself a servile wretch
To others evermore,
That tells his secrets unto such
As knew them not before.’

Let your mind set a lock upon your lips, but be sure that your will keeps the key. If at any time you fall into the humour of chattering, keep the philosopher’s check upon your tongue, *i.e.* ‘ lingua, quo vadis ?’

Bembo, a primitive Christian, came to a friend of his to teach him a psalm. The friend began to recite

the 39th psalm: 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.' Upon hearing this first clause, Bembo stopped his tutor, saying, 'This is enough for me, if I learn it as I ought.' And being after six months rebuked for not coming again, he replied, that he had not yet perfectly learned his first lesson. Nay, after nineteen years, he professed (with a rare humility) that he had scarce learned in all that time to fulfil that one precept.

Few men have had to repent of being too silent, but many have bitterly bewailed their not having been silent enough. A man may easily utter what by silence he hath hitherto concealed, but it is impossible for him to recall what he hath once spoken.

Things that are lawful to be done, are not always expedient to be spoken of, nor are those that are fit to be told always good to be done; we may be said to pay tribute to as many persons as we reveal our secrets to.

Into a mouth kept closed, flies do not enter, as the Spanish proverb says.

I am unwilling at any time to be the recipient of a secret; but if my friend will make my breast the repository of one, I do declare, '*ubi deposuerit, ibi inveniet,*' where he hath laid it, there he shall find it. Therefore I pay a great veneration to the memory of that excellent Leæna, who after her two lovers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, having failed in the execution¹ of their enterprise, had been put to death, was brought to the torture, to be made to declare what other accomplices there were of the conspiracy; but she continued so constant, that she never incriminated anyone. In remembrance of which fact, the Athenians caused a lion of brass to

¹ They killed Hipparchus, but not his brother Hippias the 'tyrant,' as they had intended to do.—H. S.

be erected which had no tongue, and placed it at the entrance of a castle, indicating her invincible courage by the character of the animal that they chose, and her perseverance in secrecy in that they made it to have no tongue.¹

It was one of the maxims of Pythagoras, 'entertain not a swallow under your roof'; thereby advising a man not to admit into his society a mere talkative person, one intemperate of speech, who cannot contain what is committed to him.

There are some men who differ not at all from broken pitchers, in that they can retain nothing; all that they hear they let run out of their mouth.

Freedom of speech I must confess to be a necessary privilege for a true gentleman, but the diversity of human affairs often renders it dangerous. To hear much and speak little is an excellent rule, and sometimes an heroic act.

Homer had good reason to esteem Menelaus, Nestor, and Ulysses, (men who were slow to speak) to be the wisest among all the Greeks, and to think Thersites a fool for his babbling.

Silence is high wisdom in a fool, and speech is a great test of a wise man. A man who cannot maintain some secrecy is an open letter for every one to read.

It was the advice of Philip² Duke of Burgundy to the Earl Charolais³ his son, 'Think to-day, and speak to-morrow.'

A wise man draws the curtain of prudence (which is silence) before him, to make himself walk unseen:

¹ I have altered this paragraph of De Britaine's as little as possible.—H. S.

² Philippe le Bon : died 1467.—H. S.

³ Charles le Téméraire, 'une des grandes figures du moyen âge,' bore the title of 'Comte de Charolais' during his father's lifetime. He was born in 1433, and killed in 1477 in his defeat outside the walls of Nancy.—H. S.

yet many a silent man is like a shut book, which if you open and read, you may find good matter in it.

But I would not have you pay too superstitious a reverence to Angerona the Goddess of silence, lest you make yourself liable to that paradox which was set before one who was silent: 'si prudens sis, stultus es; si stultus, sapiens.' And you are to distinguish well between the silence of the boor, which is stupidity; the silence of the knave, which has a criminal intent; and the silence of the good and of the wise.

A prudent reserve will be your best security, and slowness of belief the best sinew of your wisdom. Never open yourself to an acquaintance but with a half-light and full advantage: never impart that to a friend, which may tempt him to be your enemy. Your servants (who sometimes prove the worst of enemies) you may admit into your bed-chamber, but never into your cabinet of private business.¹

A secret, like a crown, is not a possession that can be entrusted to every man; and to whomsoever you do commit it, you do but enable him to undo you. You must sometimes therefore purchase his secrecy at his own price; and if you shut your purse he may open his mouth. And remember that persons who are reported to have revealed secrets of state are not usually long-lived. Consider how precarious and unhappy your life and fortunes will be if they depend on such a slender thread as the whim of another, therefore if you be tempted to dabble in affairs of state, let me advise you always to keep a wary eye upon yourself, and an observant eye upon others.

¹ The writer is here addressing a reader who has official or political position.—H. S.

SECTION VII.

Of Reputation.

REPUTATION is an excellent possession, it begets popularity (which rules the world), popularity begets riches, and riches beget honours. Reputation is a perfume that a man carries about him, and diffuses wherever he goes ; and it is the lawful heir of a man's character.

Agesilaus, being asked how one might get the greatest reputation amongst men, replied, ' by speaking the best, and doing the bravest, things.'

Reputation is made up of the breath of many that speak well of you ; if by a disobliging word you silence the meanest, the gale which is to bear up your credit will be the less strong. If by your civility you please all, your reputation will be the greater, and the chorus of praise will be the louder.

The shortest way to attain reputation is that of merit ; if industry be founded on merit, it builds up a lasting renown. The gaining of reputation is but the publication of your merits to the advantage of your future.

It will be more glory to you to perform that which has not been attempted before, or has been attempted without success, or has been achieved, but not so well as you achieve it, than to succeed in some matter of greater difficulty, wherein you are but an imitator of those that went before you. An excellent painter, observing that others had gained to themselves the name of great masters, resolved to paint in a new style. Some persons asked of him why he did not paint after the manner of such and such an one ; he answered that it was more credit to him to invent and practise a style of his own, than to be

ranked among the followers of one of the founders of the recognised schools of painting.

Having reared a reputation, you will need great skill to preserve it fresh and flourishing, and to keep it from becoming stale and out of date:¹ for an ordinary novelty pleases people more than a costly heirloom that is in a state of decay. You must therefore always retain a manner that may create curiosity, and excite expectation. Variation is stimulating: the sun by setting makes us reflect on his worth to us, and by rising encourages us to hopes for the day that is coming.

To men in high place there can be no thought more full of anxiety than how to keep up a great reputation. 'Non minus malum ex magna quam mala fama.' Great merit and wide reputation are like a high wind and a large sail, which often sink the vessel. Alcibiades, by the noble exploits which he achieved on behalf of his country, had obtained such a great reputation for ability, that when he failed in the exact performance of anything he was at once suspected, not of being unable, but of being unwilling, to succeed in the matter.

Therefore it is sometimes wise to clip the wings of reputation, and not to suffer them to spread much beyond the compass of the nest. A great man may even find it to his advantage to make some slight slips intentionally as showing that he is not infallible, and so inviting a certain indulgence from others.

There are men in the world, who strive to advance their own fame, by decrying the character and merit of other people. In this case you may often conclude rightly, that they have attempted, but failed, to imitate the virtues or the doings of those whom they

¹ De Britaine's phrase.—H. S.

decry. But sometimes such men are but persons embittered by misfortune or injustice; in which case they are to be pitied, but not approved. Never think of raising your reputation by detraction.

The being over-praised may do you more hurt than good; for when anything is cried up and much talked of, people often imagine greater excellences in it, than in truth there are; for reality in such cases can never come up to the standard fixed by imagination; so that the excellences falling short of the idea, men are apt to slight that of which they expected so much.

Reputation is gained slowly, and seldom gets over a strain; if it is once broken, it can never be well set again. Nor is there any ointment, to tell the truth, which heals a sorely wounded reputation.

Be studious therefore to preserve your reputation; for if that be once lost, you are like an obliterated inscription, you become of no value. At best, your name will hardly outlive your funeral.¹ Reputation is like a glass, which being once cracked, will never be perfect again; a fine reputation flawed will bring you into contempt; an old name dishonoured is worth less than a homely one which is only used by worthy persons. It is easy to get an ill name, because evil is so willingly believed by the vulgar; and bad impressions are very difficult to efface.

The navigation of public life is dangerous, chiefly because it is full of rocks, for reputation to split upon. You must be careful to keep up the reputation of your ability and virtue with the crowd if you wish to play a conspicuous part in the world, for in that case it will be of more advantage to you to be accounted wise and virtuous by the ignorant, than by

¹ De Britaine uses this idea at page 9 of his pamphlet 'The Interest of England in the Present War with Holland. London, 1672.'—H. S.

the learned; for the ignorant are many, but the learned are few. Rare characters please but a small circle of persons. It was a principle of Julius Cæsar's not to be illustrious among the great, so much as to be the favourite of the people.

Your good name cannot be preserved with too great care, nor forfeited without serious injury to yourself; there is no such infelicity as to survive one's reputation, nor is there a greater folly than to risk its loss. That brave archer deserves commendation, who refused to show his skill to Alexander, fearing to lose the reputation in an hour, which he had spent all his lifetime in acquiring. It is more difficult to repair a credit that is once shaken, than to keep that in a flourishing greenness, which was never blasted. Reputation is like a fire, when you have kindled it, you may easily preserve it; but if once you extinguish it, you will not easily kindle it again, or at least you may not be able to make it burn so brightly as before.

Once upon a time fire, water, and fame went to travel together, liking each other's company; they consulted, in case of losing one another, how they might be sure to meet again; fire said, where you see smoke, there you shall find me; water said, where you see mists lie low, there you shall find me; but fame said, take heed how you lose me, for if you do, you will run a risk of never meeting me again.

'Therefore,
Thy credit wary keep, 'tis quickly gone,
Being got by many actions, lost by one.'



SECTION VIII.

Of Vain-glory and Boasting.

NEVER see a vain-glorious man, but he makes me think of the fly which sat upon the axletree of the chariot wheel; and said, 'What a dust I raise!' There are some persons so vain, that if they have never so little hand in any business, they think it is they that manage it; they make a triumph of everything they do; and they are assured that all achievements that concern them are the results of their own efforts.

Undue self-esteem is commonly punished by universal contempt; he that praises himself excites the scorn of others. Homer was so blinded with conceit, and so over-confident in his own abilities in poetry, that he let fall a false quantity, and left it on record in the very first verse of his *Iliad*.¹

A show of affected dignity offends more than a parade of good looks. To behave disdainfully, will make a man hated, and it is dangerous enough in this world even to be envied.

Never boast of your noble or gentle descent or of the grandeur of your family; for the oldest nobility is younger than no nobility, since men were at first of like station: many a yeoman is a gentleman in the rough, which another age may see cut and polished; and the greatest nobleman is but a gentleman printed in large capitals.

The Marquis of Spinola,² commander of all the

¹ De Britaine is responsible for this severe remark.—H. S.

² Ambrogio, Marchese di Spinola, was born in 1571 (some say in 1569) and died in 1630. The reader may like to be reminded of the epigram uttered by Henri IV. of France about him, that Spinola had deceived him by telling him the truth.—H. S.

Spanish forces in the Netherlands, and the Prince of Orange,¹ who commanded the army of the Dutch, were two famous rivals; the Prince, to depreciate the Marquis, said, that Spinola was sprung from a merchant family, and consequently was not comparable with himself, who came of princely extraction. But the Marquis sent him word, 'that it was a more glorious thing for a merchant to have command over princes, than for a prince to be commanded by merchants.'

I knew a man who by occupation was a butcher; he acquired a considerable estate, and purchased a coat-of-arms. He left several sons, who often boasted of their gentility; they falling one day into discourse with a gentleman of an ancient family, and babbling to him about their coat-of-arms, the gentleman asked them what the coat was, they told him 'a flaming torch.' The gentleman replied, that their 'flaming torch was but a cow's tail reversed.'

If any man desires to cut a good figure in society, let him do it rather by great personal worth than by borrowed appearances of gentility. I will not with the Egyptians vaunt of my nobility, nor with the Arcadians contend for antiquity with the moon; integrity is my coronet and loyalty my livery. Those persons who make a boast of their nobility or ancient descent (because they can boast of nothing else) are like the man of Abydenus,

'Qui se credebat miros audire Tragædos
In vacuo lætus sessor, plausorque theatro,'

or they are like unto that ignorant rich man Calvisius Sabinus, who thought himself very learned, because he maintained learned men about him.

¹ Maurice de Nassau, Prince of Orange, Stadtholder of the Low Countries; he was born in 1567, and died in 1625.—H. S.

A ranting and boasting man, is too often like a drum, which makes a great noise, but look in it and there is nothing. But sometimes a few grains of vain-glory may set forth a man's worth and merit, and, like varnish to ceilings, make him shine, as it did Sigismond of Lunenburgh. Without some feathers of ostentation, the fight would have been but slow; and though Sigismond might have taken good aim, yet he could never have hit the eagle without them.¹

There are men who magnify themselves as if they were the only oracles in the world, and as if the whole orb of learning moved in their heads; but I must warn you, that as amongst wise men he is often the wisest that thinks he knows least; so among fools, he is usually the greatest that thinks he knows most.

It can be no glory to any man to be proud of his knowledge, if he considers, that much of the knowledge of the arts we possess, we have been taught by the very beasts and other creatures; of the spider we learn to spin and sew; of the swallow to build; of the nightingale music; of divers creatures physic; the goats of Candia being shot with an arrow, do choose out from a million of simples the herb Dittany, and therewith cure themselves; the tortoise having eaten of a viper, doth seek for wild marjoram to purge herself; the dragon clears her eyes with fennel; the cranes with their bills inject sea-water into their bodies when disease attacks them.²

We cannot trace back the pedigree of knowledge beyond Solomon, much less can we decipher it upon Seth's Pillars; but with astonished ignorance, we

¹ Does this refer to Sigismund I. (the Great), King of Poland, and to the victory of Orsza? In that case the 'eagle' is Russia.—H. S.

² I have left this passage much as De Britaine wrote it.—H. S.

may read its epitaph in the confusion of the plains of Shinar.

He that does not know that he is imperfect, is but imperfect in knowledge. A little esteem of one's self often hinders a great deal that would come from others; boasting may gain applause from fools, but it only puts a wise hearer to the expense of a blush. I value the 'good' of one wise man more than the 'astounding' of a multitude, or the 'superb' of the theatre; prudent Antigonus considered that his whole renown hung upon the single testimony of Zeno.

A poet being derided for having a tragedy played, when none were present save Plato, answered 'this one person is more than all the Athenians besides.'

Vain-glorious men are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own vaunts. Vain men expose their actions to the public, as painters do their pieces drawn in water-colours, (which are representations of what was only in their imagination), to be gazed at, and admired by the multitude.

On a certain person's boasting to Aristotle of the greatness of his country; 'that,' said Aristotle, 'is not the point, but whether you deserve to belong to that great country.'

When a man once comes to be inflated with this disease of adoring himself, farewell respect and reverence to all others! Aristotle seeing a youth very conceited, and withal ignorant; 'young man, saith he, I wish I were what you think yourself to be, and I wish that my enemies were what you are.'

Wind can puff up empty bladders; self-esteem can swell out the fool's skin.

Socrates perceiving Alcibiades to be exceedingly proud, and given to boasting of his riches and lands, shewed him a map of the world, and bade him find

out Attica thereon. This being done, Socrates next begged that Alcibiades would point out his own lands upon the map; Alcibiades answered that they were not marked there; 'do you boast,' replied Socrates, 'of that which is such an unimportant speck of earth?'

He that is his own appraiser, will usually be mistaken in the value. It was the glory of Jugurtha¹ 'plurimum faciendo, et nihil de seipso loquendo': by this he rose above envy, and received the honour and regard of posterity. It should be considered a sufficient recompense for the doing of a brave action, to have brave men approve of it.

Agricola, saith Tacitus, notwithstanding his many services done to the empire, 'nunquam in suam famam gestis exultavit,' did never boast of any action of his fame, but, as an inferior planet, did modestly acknowledge the light he had to be wholly derived from a higher Sun.

Germanicus, having quieted the tumultuous broils and insurrections of the Germans, caused a pile of weapons to be raised with this stately title, 'Debel-latis inter Rhenum Albimque nationibus, exercitum Tiberii Cæsaris ea monumenta, Marti, et Jovi, et Augusto sacravisse'; to the effect that 'the nations between the Rhine and Elbe being overcome, Tiberius Cæsar's army had consecrated those monuments to Mars, Jupiter, and Augustus,' but he added nothing concerning himself.

He is doubly excellent, who keeps all his excellences and perfections to himself, without boasting of any; he is going to the summit of applause by a way that is not much frequented.

Think not yourself a figure among ciphers, lest

¹ Jugurtha, King of Numidia, a brave chief whose actual ability was somewhat over-rated by his Roman adversaries.—H. S.

you prove to be a cipher among figures. As a rule, no man is content with his own condition in life, though it be the best, nor dissatisfied with his intelligence, though it be the worst. In the kingdom of the blind, he that hath but one eye is the sovereign.

When I have done a kindness or good office to any man, I never like to tell of it; and to do so is to risk turning a possible friend into a certain enemy. Nothing will give a greater lustre to all your virtues than modesty; never magnify yourself or boast of your great actions. As it is in falconry, so it is in human life, those of the weakest wings are commonly the highest fliers. But do you be satisfied to do good work, and leave it to others to call attention to it.

It is the stamp of a great soul rather to do things worthy to be admired, than to admire what itself hath done.

There are some who hold it to be the greatest honour to be thought the wonder of their times; which if they attain, it is but the condition of monsters at a fair, that are generally much marvelled at, but more abhorred. Do you shew forth no such foolish wisdom and desire no such degrading distinction.

Modesty is a lustrous jewel, and one that will never become too common.



SECTION IX.

Of Censure and Detraction.



HERE are some folk that love to look on the knotty side of the arras, and to take little notice of the excellent figure that is wrought upon the right side of the hangings. If they see many perfections in a man, and

spy but one failing in him, that one blot, they think, eclipses the glory of all the others. ‘*Ubi multa nitent non ego paucis offendor maculis.*’

I have so many failings in myself, that I desire never to censure any man ; if I do so, I surely censure myself most. And I love not to rebuke that in another which I find in my own breast ; I affect not to play the epicure, and at the same time to inveigh against luxury ; or to be perfidious myself, and yet to expect an exact fidelity from my neighbour.

A wise man, who values himself upon the score of character, and not of repute, thinks himself neither better nor worse for the opinion of others. I have often wondered how it should come to be that every man loves himself the best, and yet regards other men’s opinions concerning himself more than he does his own.

When some one told Pleistarchus that a notorious railer spake well of him ; ‘*I’ll lay my life,*’ said he, ‘*somebody hath told him that I am dead, for he can speak well of no man living.*’ He that thinks he is abused, let him argue thus within himself ; either he hath deserved it, or he hath not ; if he hath, it is a judgment ; if he hath not, it is an injustice.

When you discover any faults in others, make the right use of them, which is to correct and amend the like failures in yourself ; therefore when you observe any follies in others, forget not to put this question to yourself, ‘*am I not given to the same ?*’ Moses, an abbot and a godly man, was once summoned to give sentence upon a person who had offended ; the abbot came, but he brought a bag full of sand upon his shoulders. Being asked what he meant by that, ‘*They are (said he) my sins and errors ; I can neither sufficiently know them, nor can I bear their weight easily : how then shall I judge another ?*’

We live much by the words and evidence of others ;

truth seldom comes pure to us when it comes from afar ; and since it takes some tincture of the passions it meets with by the way, it often pleases or displeases us according to the colour that passion or interest gave to it.

Men usually frame both opinions and censures according to the mould of evil in themselves : usually they are not the most guilty that are the most blamed : those who speak against worldliness often keep their own house furnished for her. And some blame errors which they much wish that they themselves had the daring to commit.

A first report makes little impression upon me ; for falsehood often marches in the front, while truth follows in the rear. I always keep a door open for a second or third informant ; to do otherwise may be dangerous and may give advantage to the artifices of malice, for ill-disposed persons are quick to colour facts for those whom they judge to be credulous.

There is no man so innocent as never to be ill-spoken of, no wretch so wicked as to lack an advocate ; but too often public opinion, like a river, bears up worthless things, and drowns those which are weighty and valuable.

A man must have had real experience of life, before he is able truly and judiciously to judge of another's character, or of his actions.

It is a harder thing to avoid censure than to gain applause ; the latter may be done by one great or wise action in a lifetime ; but to avoid censure, a man must pass his whole life, without saying or doing one ill or foolish thing that is bruited abroad.

Consider how apt men are to be mistaken in their judgment of others. For a long time Democritus was taken for a madman, and much time elapsed before Socrates had any great reputation in the world ; and how long was it before Cato came to be

understood? Nay, he was affronted and condemned, and people never knew the value of him till they had lost him.

Let no man be confident of his own virtue, since the best of us are but sinners; and let no man rely too much upon his own judgment, for sometimes the wisest have been deceived.

Who is so happy as to please all, and to be envied by none? Who is so good that no man complains of him? The Athenians were displeased with their Simonides because he talked too loudly: the Thebans accused Panniculus of spitting too much: the Carthaginians spake ill of Hannibal because he went open breasted, with his chest bare; others laughed at Julius Cæsar, because his girdle was ill-tied.

Before you censure abroad, see that all is right at home, otherwise you may prove such a 'censor morum' as was Munatius Plancus in the Roman story, '*qui nihil objicere possit adolescentibus, quod non agnosceret senex*': or you may be condemned as the physician was by the tragedian, for pretending to heal other men's distempers, while he was himself uncured.

'Cum tua pervideas oculis male lippus inunctis,
Cur in amicorum vitia tam cernis acute?'

I love not to arraign other men's faults, yet to leave myself out of the indictment; I am not curious to know what my neighbour hath said, done, or attempted; but am only solicitous about what I do myself, that it may be just and honest.

When anything displeases me, before I condemn it in others, I enquire if I be not guilty of it myself; and by so doing, from whatever I hear or see, I draw some advantage, and things are at a good pass when one man is the better for another man's errors. One man's fault may prove to be another man's lesson;

a certain musician was wont to send his scholars to hear a bad player that they might avoid his mistakes.

Man is a tree, the fruit whereof becomes ripe late in the season ; his quality is not seen in the spring of his life ; we must wait to see the flower and fruit of his career ; as an Italian saith, ' the evening crowns the morning,' and the character of a man must be judged in its maturity.

Be not censorious, for thou knowest not whom thou judgest : it is often a noble error to speak well of an evil man, but it is always a base mistake to utter blame of a good man. A censurer (more than any other man) is liable to incur censure ; for as he takes upon him to judge of others, he is assumed to be less faulty than his victims ; they are tempted to a strict consideration of his life and actions, and are naturally prone to pounce upon his least dereliction.

Never make it your business to discern the faults of others ; rather expend your care upon preventing and amending your own. And remember how Socrates answered, when asked to criticise a certain book, ' that he thought those things which he did not understand likely to be as worthy of commendation as those things which lay within his knowledge.'

If I see a vice in a man, I may reprove the vice, but I strive not to reproach its victim : I love not to lash others, because I know that I myself often deserve stripes.

When I am told that any man hath complained of me, or abused me, I am not overmuch concerned. I try to behave myself according to the rules of prudence and of charity, and to remember that I know of the incident only at second hand, and perchance need not believe in it ; or if he did say it, then I like to think that somebody hath misunderstood him, and to be confident that he had no ill-meaning in

it ; nay, it may be that he said it on purpose that I should hear of it again, knowing that it would do me good.

Patience is a remedy against all slanders, and that old courtier was in the right who, being asked how he kept himself so long in favour, answered " by submitting to wrongs and bad language, and crying ' your humble servant ' in return." He that bases his actions upon rectitude, and does not judge himself by public opinion, need not heed ignorant abuse. When I am ill spoken of, I take it thus ; if I have not deserved it, then I am none the worse for it, if I have deserved it, then I will amend my ways.

If a diamond be of the first water, what matters it who says that it is paste ? If my conscience tell me that I am innocent, why should I care who tells the world that I am guilty ? Malice may spit her venom at me, but only sin can greatly hurt me : scandal is only a bolt shot by the tongue, which returns with greater force upon him that let it fly, like an arrow that is shot into the air and falls point downward upon the archer.

Never speak ill of any man ; if you do so of a good man you commit sin ; if of a bad man, you should rather give him your prayers. Never carry a sword in your tongue wherewith to wound the reputation of any man. The anger of a talkative blustering man is not much to be regarded ; but beware of provoking a calm and judicious man to anger, for that is playing the fool while he arms as your enemy.

A certain philosopher being asked how he behaved himself when he was reviled, said, ' As an ambassador who leaves a palace without gaining an audience.' The vanity that is vexed at a reasonable reproach, does so because it hungers for unreasonable commendation.

The personal defects of others should never be the subject of jest ; nor should the indulgence which others shew to our deficiencies lead us to ignore their existence.

Calumny, to a virtuous person, should matter no more than a shower does to the sea. When the two Petillii accused Scipio of many crimes before the people ; ‘ On that very day (said he) I conquered Hannibal and Carthage : I am now going with my crown to sacrifice at the Capitol, and there let him that pleaseth pass his vote upon me.’ Having thus said, he went his way, not regarding them or their accusations.

There is nothing so irksome to me as to hear one man back-bite another : Memnon,¹ hearing that a mercenary had been abusing Alexander, struck the man a blow with his lance, saying, ‘ that he had hired him to fight against Alexander, not to rail at him.’

If anyone tells me that such and such a man slandered me thus and thus, I never strive to clear myself, but I answer him thus, ‘ he knows not of my other faults ; if he did he would never have related only those you tell me of.’

There is no protection against a back-biting tongue, it is sharper than the razor of Actius ; I had rather stand at the mercy of a basilisk or a serpent, than the fury of an ungoverned tongue. But it is royal to be ill spoken of for doing well ; if I can but walk steadily along a high path, I shall not much heed the howling of the winds or the snarls from the thickets.

Let your discourse of others be fair ; speak ill of nobody. To do it in his absence is the property of a coward, that stabs a man behind his back ; to do

¹ The brave Greek, the hero of the defence of Halicarnassus, whose loyal devotion to Darius and the Persian cause was cut short by his comparatively early death in B.C. 333.—H. S.

it to his face, is to add insult to injury. He that praises may bestow a favour, but he that detracts certainly commits a robbery, for he takes from another what is justly his. Every man thinks he deserves better than in truth he does ; therefore you cannot please mankind more, than by speaking kindly : man is the most whimsical and vain creature in the world.

I have observed, that no men are so ready to sully the honour and reputation of others, as those who deserve the worst themselves ; yet I have so much charity for them, as to believe that often they do it, not so much from malice, as to gain a reputation for virtue and judgment. Wherefore if any person speaks ill of you, do not disquiet yourself ; but endeavour to live so virtuously that the world may not credit that to be true which is reported of you ; and you must remember, that often little minds speak ill only because they have never been taught to speak well.

Your own innocency will be like a breastplate of steel to you, for a pure soul is an impregnable castle against all the artillery of base tongues ; however it will be your wisdom to carry the love of God in your heart as an antidote against the poison of virulent tongues.

I am not much concerned as to what the common people think of me : nay, if they tell me that I am a fool, I can give much the same answer as that great Chancellor did, who when Cardinal Wolsey told him that he was the veriest fool in the Council, ‘ God be thanked,’ said he, ‘ if my master hath only one fool here.’ I desire to honour my life, not by other men’s opinions, but by my own actions. ‘ Si vis beatus esse, cogita hoc primum, contemnere et contemni ; nondum es felix, si te turba non deriserit.’

Make yourself agreeable to all ; if only because there is no person so contemptible that it may not prove to be in his power to become your best friend or your worst enemy. No enemy is contemptible enough to be despised, since the most despicable seem to command greater strength, wisdom, and interest than their own, to assist them in designs of malice or mischief. The eagle is not safe in the arms of Jupiter, the day she offends the little beetle. Have a care of an ox before you, of an ass behind you, and of the priest on either side of you.¹ If you do courtesies to a hundred men, and disoblige but one, that one will be perhaps more active in doing you hurt, than all the others will be in serving you. Therefore if you wish to gain respect, turn usurer, and make all men enter into obligations to you. The world is a shop of tools, of which the wise man only is the master.

After the tools are laid down there cometh the judgment of the work and the worker.



SECTION X.

Of Passion.



WISE man is a monarch, for he hath an empire within himself ; there reason commands in chief, and justice occupies the throne and wields the sceptre. All his passions obey him like dutiful subjects ; though the territories seem but small and narrow, yet the command and the realm are great, and they reach farther than his that wears the moon for his crest, or the other's that wears the sun for his helmet.²

¹ I have left two curious sentences unrevised here.—H. S.

² The allusion seems to be to the Sultan of Turkey and to the Shah of Persia.—H. S.

'*Latius regnes avidum domando Spiritum, quam
Si Lybiam remotis Gadibus jungas,
Et uterque Pœnus serviat uni.*'

Passion and reason wage a kind of civil war within us, and as the one or the other hath dominion we are either good or bad.

He that can subdue his passions, will obtain a more glorious victory than if he set up his standards on the farthest confines of Asia and Africa ; and his triumph is more renowned, than if he had overthrown the Medes and Persians. Fabius would never have conquered Hannibal, if he had not first overcome himself.

They which have conquered nations, driven armies before them, and subdued all their open enemies, have sometimes been conquered by their own passions without making any resistance. Alexander, when he was master of the world, was yet a slave to his passions and was led in triumph by them.

If you can but tune your passions, and reduce them to harmony by reason, you may render yourself as pleasant to the wise, as the birds and beasts were to Orpheus when they listened to his harp. As you are a part of the universe, I would not have you disturb, by any disorderly and irregular passions, the harmony of it, and become a jarring string in so well tuned an instrument.

You may heap up gold, gather together silver, and raise pyramids of honours ; but if you do not compose the disorders of your own mind, stint your desires, and so deliver yourself from unnecessary fears and cares, you are but giving strong drink to a man in a fever.

The way to hold your passions in check, is first to curb your desires ; if they be ill, do not permit them to run loose ; if they be good, then moderate

them, and do not expect too much enjoyment as a result of them. Always balance what you hope for by what you fear ; for a wise man ought to live no more in hope than in fear, nor should he put it into the power of fortune to make or mar his content.

It is a fine exhibition of authority to rule one's self, and to govern our passions is a veritable triumph of wisdom. I will never gratify my enemies so far, as to show myself furious with them ; for a mind transported with passion, rejects the best reasons and retains the worst opinions. It is like a sieve which lets the flour pass, and keeps nothing but the bran. A wise man makes all his passions subservient to his reason and his will.

Of all passions there is none so extravagant and cruel as that of anger ; other passions solicit and mislead us, but this one too often runs away with us by force, and hurries us as well to our own as to another's ruin. It vents itself frequently upon the wrong person, and discharges itself upon the innocent instead of upon the guilty. Sometimes it makes out the most trivial offences to be capital, and perhaps even punishes an inconsiderate word with public-disgrace, fetters, or even death : allows a man neither time nor means for defence, but judges a cause without hearing it, and admits of no mediation : spares neither friend nor foe, but tears all to pieces, and casts human nature into a perpetual state of war.

Look upon a hasty man in a fit of rage, and you may see all Africa and its prodigies in him ; he is more savage than a tiger from thence ; blow him into a flame, and you may see volcanoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes in him. When you are in a great rage do but go and look in your mirror. Then ask yourself what a portrait that would be which should distort your features as anger has done.

The storms of passion toss the barque of life ; but let reason be your pilot to bring you into a safe port, and have a care that you do not darken the storm by any unwary word or action.

It was said by Pythagoras, 'cut not fire with a sword' ; meaning that one should not exasperate an angry person ; but should appear to give way to him. Do not attempt to argue with any man when he is in a passion, for men are not, like iron, to be wrought upon when they are hot. Give place to the tide of fury, and let it have its full course ; when it is at the highest, it will turn again ; and then you will have the current as strong with you, as before it was against you.

I fear unruly passions more than the arrows of an enemy, and the slavery of them more than the fetters of a conqueror. One can give no surer indication of the possession of a great mind, than by shewing that one is not carried away by anger by any accident whatsoever : in such a case clouds and tempests may gather below, but all above remains quiet and serene. It is the mark of a fine character to restrain itself, and to move as it were in a serene atmosphere. Oppose the first impulse of ill-temper ; if you cannot resist the first, you will far less resist the second, and so matters will grow worse and worse ; for the difficulty which in the beginning might have been overcome grows greater by neglect. Passions are the elementary forces of the mind ; so soon as they begin to be turgid and inflamed, the mind becomes sick, and needs the surgeon Restraint and the physician Wisdom.

Knave often aim at exciting the fury of fools, for when a blockhead is angry, all his defences are exposed. But do you smile, and pass by their lure. You must keep your passions in your power, as Ulysses did the winds in his bottle, and deal with

them as we do¹ with madmen, namely, keep them in chains for fear of mischief; for no wild beast is more ungovernable than some human passions are.

Some persons are above our anger, others below it; to be furious with our inferiors is degrading, to break out to our superiors is insolent. And though anger may make dull men witty, it usually keeps them poor.

As Diogenes was discussing the subject of anger, an insolent young fellow, to try if he could put him outside his philosophy, began to spit on his face. 'Young man,' said Diogenes, 'this doth not yet make me angry; but I am in some doubt as to whether it ought not to do so.'

Be circumspect in everything you say or do, as if your enemies stood at your elbow and overlooked every action: this will soon beget in you a great desire and earnest endeavours to restrain your disorderly passions; strive to do so by filling your mind with good thoughts and by making firm resolutions to proceed in a virtuous course of life.

Our passions are a great deal older than our reason; they came into the world with us, but our reason followed a long time after. There are no more effectual remedies against anger, than time and patience. A servant of Plato having committed a great fault, 'Speusippus,'² said the philosopher, 'do you beat that fellow, for I am angry'; thus he forbore taking the law into his own hands, for the very reason that would have made another man do so.

When I see my friend in a great rage against any person I pretend to be angry too, and I join with him not only in his opinion of the injury but even in his projects of revenge; by this means I gain

¹ At De Britaine's date.—H. S.

² Son of Plato's sister, and himself a philosopher.—H. S.

time, and by advising some greater method of resentment, I put off present dangers, and gradually abate his fury.

The first step to the moderation of anger, is to perceive that you are giving way to passion; by that means you enter the field with a full power over yourself, and may consider how far you ought to give place to resentment; in this way you may be angry, and yet put a stop to it as you please.

If your passions are duly understood you should need no other cure than the seeing of them as they are; let the first fervour abate, and the mist which darkens the mind will be lessened if not dispelled. It is a sign of having a good stock of sense when one is seen to prevent and correct this fault, since it is a disease of the mind, wherein a wise man ought to govern himself as in a distemper of the body.

Take away that which provokes anger and you may avoid the fault. When a stranger brought Cotiso some earthen vessels, beautifully shaped and admirably adorned with sculptures, but thin and brittle, he requited the stranger for them, and then brake them all in pieces; 'lest,' said he, 'my anger should provoke me to punish excessively some third person who breaks them.'

He that would exercise power in a way profitable to himself and grievous to nobody else, let him practise it upon his passions.

Plato was about to strike his servant, but while his hand was in the air, he checked himself, and held it in that menacing posture; a friend of his took notice of it, and asked him what he meant. 'I am now,' said the philosopher, 'about to punish an angry man': that is, he had passed by the servant to chastise himself, for he thought it was not fit that a servant should be in the power of one that was not master of his own passions.

To be angry at unrighteous anger is almost the only justifiable exercise of this passion; for rage is an affection so unquiet and turbulent, that if it once seizes us, it unmans us. Evils are not removed but made worse by this vice, and the anger itself usually does more harm than the injury which occasions it; other passions rise in us by degrees, but this flashes like gun-powder, blowing up all in a moment. Anger may alight in the breast of a wise man, but it broods in the bosom of fools. A holy man is never angry at anything but sin, and he that is angry with the sin of anger, will surely never sin in anger.

If you be naturally disposed to anger frequent the company of the patient; by this means, without difficulty, you may attain to a fairly even temper, for society is a fine school; manners, habits of the mind, and even beliefs, are insensibly communicated to us when we mix freely with others.

Never sink so far below your proper dignity, as to let any passion get the better of you. When passion enters in at the fore-gate, wisdom goes out at the postern. He who commands himself, alone can hope to command the world; and the more authority you have over others, the more command you need over yourself.

I can only wonder at the temperament of that Persian,¹ who in his fury threatened the tempest and whipped the sea.

It is not pleasant to see a passionate man scourge himself with his own scorpions, and in the midst of all that might bring him enjoyment give himself anxieties and alarms.

It is the folly of many men to break out into a great passion upon trivial occasion; like that gentleman, (learned, but surely not wise,) who fell into a

¹ Xerxes I., who ordered 300 lashes to be given to the Hellespont, after a storm had destroyed his bridge of boats.—H. S.

violent disorder at seeing a man ploughing and was much incensed against him, because the fellow did not plough 'secundum artem,' in drawing his furrows mathematically, and 'in linea recta,' as he said. A friend of the poor gentleman standing by, told him, that he had little reason to be displeased, if he considered the small difference that there is between 'errare' and 'arare.'

I am not troubled, if I see a butterfly in the air, because I cannot catch it.

Be thou somewhat like the Caspian Sea, which is said never to ebb nor flow.

It is more prudent to pass by trivial offences than to quarrel concerning them; by the latter method you do but put yourself on a level with the offender, whereas by the former you might soar above him toward a higher sphere.



SECTION XI.

Of Injuries and Revenge.



WHEN I have an injury done me, I never set the beacon afire, nor am I greatly troubled. I consider who did it: if my kinsman, he did it without intention; if my friend, he did it against his will; if my enemy, it is no more than I expected: I ever put as fair a construction as possible upon anything that happens to me.

When someone sprinkled water upon Archelaus,¹ and his friends enlarged upon the offence; 'you are mistaken,' said he, 'he did not sprinkle it upon me, but upon some other person whom he took me to be.'

I have often found by experience, that I have fallen

¹ A Greek philosopher, preceptor of Socrates.—H.S.

into no great inconveniences when I have taken wrongs patiently.

And we shew ourselves greater than our adversaries, when we let the world see that they cannot disturb us. When children and fools do the same things to us that we fret at in others of more advanced understanding, we pass them by without a frown; which shews, that it is not the acts done us by our enemies, but our own resentment that harms us most.

I strive to bear any injury that is done to me with the same patience with which a physician endures abuse from a delirious patient. I hope that I can patiently sustain all the insults that can be offered me; my desire is to become a true Christian, and I ought to bless the bitter tongue or the cruel hand which forces me to learn from my Master the secret of His patience.

If an injury be done me, and if I behave well, there is no serious harm done; it is of the nature of an enemy to do mischief; and it is certainly the duty of a Christian to requite evil with good. I strive to make use of ill-treatment as exercise and trial of my morality; I endeavour to confront it with the innocence of my life, and the security of a good conscience, so that I am not much moved, but can still keep myself cheerful, and steady in my course.

A man that walks the streets of a populous city, must expect to meet with a stumble in one place, a stoppage in another, a splash from the gutter in a third; of just such a kind are those mischances of life which are greater in degree, and with the same resignation should they be undergone.

So long as there are bad men in the world, there will be bad actions done; and he that sets out to fret himself concerning whatsoever he sees done amiss, will never have one quiet hour while he lives. I

would have you, as it were, practise how to be a good wrestler ; which will teach you to stand firm, whatever befalls you.

If you are injured, you do your adversary too much honour by taking notice of it, and you shew that you think too meanly of yourself if you take the trouble to be revengeful ; let me advise you to ignore an insult, when you have not the power to avenge it, and generously to forgive it, when you have the means of revenge.

'Tis a noble way of taking revenge to ignore injuries ; for resentment doth but fan to a blaze that malice which neglect would let die away. Lewis the twelfth of France, being advised by some of his council to punish such as had been enemies to him when he was Duke of Orleans, answered like a prince, 'that it did not suit with the glory of a king of France, to revenge the injuries done to a Duke of Orleans.'¹

By taking revenge we play the part of executioner, whereas we might act with dignity the royal character of a granter of pardon ; the latter course shews us to advantage as conferring a gracious favour, the former does but betray our own infirmity of character.

He that pardons proclaims in so doing, that he fears not his enemies ; but revenge implies a fear of what we desire to strike, and a wish to forestall further injury. And he that is naturally revengeful, keeps wounds open, which otherwise would close of themselves.

When I am more powerful than he that hath injured me, I never take advantage of him, for that is as mean as for an armed man to force his enemy

¹ Larousse gives the saying thus : 'Il ne seroit décent et à honneur à un roi de France de venger les querelles d'un duc d'Orléans.'—H. S.

to fight when the latter hath no weapon ; and if I have no power to resist his action, I never rail at him, for anger without power, is but a trumpet that makes a noise but cannot hurt.

Pardon is a glorious kind of revenge, I think myself sufficiently revenged of my enemy if I pardon him. Cicero did more commend Cæsar for pardoning Metellus, than for the great victory which Cæsar obtained over his enemies.

I prefer the glory of pardoning before the pleasure of a victorious revenge ; for often I have seen an achieved revenge to be matter for a future repentance ; and the pleasure of doing evil soon turns in the mind of a worthy man into great displeasure with himself for having done it.

It is the function of prudence to prevent injuries touching us, and it is a mark of a great mind, when injured, not to seek revenge ; he that hath revenge in his power, and does not use it, is on the way to true greatness. Let low and vulgar spirits storm and excite themselves, but do you subdue your resentment ; to endure injuries with a brave mind, is half the battle of life. I honour Epictetus more for his 'bear and forbear,' than if he had built a pyramid.

He that doth an injury to another, doth it to himself, and suffereth more injury in the end than he hath ever wished the other man to experience.

Do injury to no person, however humble his position. Those who oppress a poor man deserve that accident should give him the chance, in days to come, of requiting them in full. Such a thing has happened not seldom as the wheel of time went round.

I shall commend unto you St. Bernard's legacy, which if story speaketh truth, was engraven upon

his tomb.¹ ‘Brethren, three things I leave unto you to be observed, which as I was able I observed. First, I never gave offence to any; if at any time it happened, I pacified it as well as I could. Secondly, I always gave less credit to my own sentiments than to those of others. Thirdly, Being injured, I never revenged it. Behold, I leave unto you Charity, Humility, and Patience.’

When you have an injury done you, consider what it is that disturbs you; it is not the injury itself, but your belief that you are injured; remove this belief, and you will not think yourself wronged. For scarcely anything can hurt you unless you join with it to hurt yourself; the mind is mostly safe and inaccessible, and out of the reach of injuries; the thing we complain of is usually without us, and stands still and quiet; it is from the traitor within us, that most of our troubles and tumults do proceed; we hatch for ourselves more wrongs than are laid for us, and the fear of being injured usually doth us more harm than the worst trouble which we endure from outside.

Catch not too soon at any offence which is offered to you, nor give way too swiftly to anger; the one shows a weak judgment, the other a perverse nature. Hath any man wronged you? Then bravely avenge yourself by slighting the injury, and the incident improves; forgive the offence, and the occurrence is past; he is below that which is best in himself who is not above resenting every injury which he sustains.

The best remedy of an injury consists in the forgetting of it; but many times we forget that remedy. It is sad to think that those things are best remembered in this world, which ought soonest to be

¹ I omit the Latin, and give the quaint English of the translation without alteration.—H. S.

forgotten. A fool struck Cato ; when he was sorry for it, Cato had forgot it ; for as Seneca says, ‘ *melius putavit non ignoscere quam agnoscere.*’

Should any man assail you with injuries, meet them with patience ; hasty words make the wounds rankle, whereas soft language dresses them, forgiveness cures them, and oblivion takes away the scars.

King Antigonus, one night when there was but a curtain between him and his soldiers, overheard one of them railing against him ; putting the hanging stuff gently aside, he said, ‘ Soldiers ! stand a little farther off for fear lest the king should hear you.’

When an ill-office is done me, I am not displeased, because it shall not be in the power of my enemy to make me angry, or put me into a passion ; I pardon others, as though I did daily offend myself ; and I abstain from offending as carefully as though I pardoned nobody. All the art that I use to vanquish my enemies is to do them all the good I can.

If you be displeased with every peccadillo, you will become habitually peevish : learn to become patient by observing the bad results of impatience in other men.

If you have any cause of unhappiness, by your impatience you add another to it : and he who yields freely to his impulses is a slave to many tyrants. I prefer the freedom of my mind, and the serenity of a soul unclouded by passion, before the empire of the world.

When I am injured, I strive never to complain, for I have observed that complaints do rather excite the desire to offend us, than elicit any compassionate feeling that can comfort us ; they suggest to those that hear them, to do the same to us, that they have done of whom we complain ; and so the knowledge of the injury done by the first wrong-doer, may serve

a second for an excuse ; so that our complaining of past injuries, may lead to our suffering further ones.

It will be a proof of your prudence to endure the rudeness and follies of other men without any show of passion ; if you cannot endure them in others, you make them your own ; for first you lose your self-control, and then you begin to offend others yourself ; and so passion tends to precipitate you into that very ill which you would avoid.

If any man doth me an injury, I am not disturbed, but endeavour to pity him more than myself, for he is the first person who was hurt in the affray ; and he received the greater damage, because he lost the use of his reason before he aimed his blow at me.

The severest punishment of an injury, is the consciousness of having done it ; and no man suffers more than he that is turned over to the pains of a deserved repentance ; it is better to gloss over injuries than to revenge them, for the revenging of an injury is but the opposing of sin with sin.

If you have at any time a purpose to take revenge, fall upon your greatest enemy first ; that is, begin upon your own extravagant rage and fury.

If an injury be done me, I am never distressed concerning it, for he that does me an injury does it either for his own pleasure or profit ; and why should I be disturbed at seeing that he loves himself better than he does me ? If any man does me an injury out of ill-nature, I consider that he is but like the briar and the thorn, which prick and scratch because they can do no otherwise.

Every day I meet with those bravoës of society, false and perfidious persons ; but they can do me no great harm, because it is not in their power to disquiet me, nor to make me do anything dishonourable. Neither am I angry with or ill affected toward them, because they are by nature near

unto me; for they are all my kinsmen by participation in the same reasoning power and the same divine particle. If at any time I have an injury done me by them, I convert it to my own advantage, and so escape evil results; for they reveal to me my own weak point wherein I may be assaulted, so that I can study to fortify that place. And if an ass doth kick me (as often one doth) I never trouble myself to bring an action against him for it, and so flatter him into the belief that he is a personage.

With regard to injuries designed against me, I am no more concerned, than Alexander was, who received in one hand the drink which his physician Philip brought him, and with the other shewed Philip the letter in which he was warned that Dareius had promised Philip great rewards if Philip would poison him. With most men injuries are never cancelled by new favours, especially when the new favours are less in value than the wrongs done; with them, favours are written in the sand, but injuries are engraven upon marble.

Study the buckler as well as the sword, and so you will be as good at enduring as at acting. But though I speak thus to you, I would not have you without the ability to defend yourself; for ‘he who maketh himself a sheep, the wolf will devour him.’

It was a maxim worthy of Cæsar’s gallantry; ‘*nec inferre, nec perpeti.*’

The wounds which our great Exemplar did suffer upon earth are as stars guiding us to where He is. But we deserve and suffer, whereas He suffered but deserved it not.



SECTION XII.

Of Virtue.

SHALL commend unto your consideration that excellent precept of Pythagoras, ‘nil turpe committas, neque coram aliis, neque tecum, maxime omnium verere teipsum’; believe me, a good man will blush as much to commit a sin in the wilderness as in a market place. Those defeats which vice gives me, are surprises rather than conquests; they overcome me not, so much as by my own unpreparedness for them I overcome myself; the less the temptation to sin, the greater is the guilt of it; and to justify a fault is a greater sin than to fall into it. And let me tell you that sin is masculine, and begets a numerous progeny; and very often it is like venom, its infection stays in the blood, when the viper is dead which gave the wound.

It is the triumph of a brave soul, to be strongly tempted, but deliberately virtuous; virtue is the sun of the microcosm, and a good conscience is its hemisphere; there is nothing which setteth up so noble a throne or chair of state in the soul of man as virtue doth.

Virtue stands in need of nothing but itself, it renders man illustrious in this life, and glorious after death; it is not gray hairs alone that beget respect, but the reputation of a long life virtuously passed. It is a strange error of men, that they rarely take thought how to live virtuously, but are usually very careful as to how to live long. It is by the bounty of nature that we live at all, but by the grace of virtue that we live well; so that virtue is a greater felicity than life itself.

An upright and virtuous man lives not to the world, but to his own conscience; he, like the planets above, steers a course contrary to that of the world.

It is no small pleasure for a virtuous person to say to himself, 'could a man enter and see into my heart, yet should he not find me guilty either of the affliction or ruin of anybody, nor culpable of envy or revenge, nor tainted with lust or greed, nor spotted with the evil of falsifying my word.' Therefore take care that the bright lustre of your virtues may enlighten the whole sphere wherein you move.

You may receive honours from your prince, but that is only to obtain a gallant livery; it is virtue that is the only true nobility. I love virtue in any man, and it will secure me against any wrong from him. It will also assure me of his good wishes, if he cannot lend me his assistance, in time of trouble.

God would not bestow heaven upon the Romans, because they were pagans; but He bestowed the empire of the world upon them, because they were virtuous.

Alexander was not so truly glorious for conquering the Indians, as for refusing to ill-use the fair daughters of Dareius; for in the one case, he did but conquer those who were less powerful than himself; but in the other, he conquered himself, who had been a conqueror of great generals.

A virtuous person looks upon the whole world as his country, and upon God as witness and judge of all his words and deeds; he so governs his life and thoughts, as if the whole world were to see the one and to read the other. He stands not more in awe of other men than he does of himself, nor does he commit any more offences because no one can see, than he does if all men are observing him. Crimes, though they may be secret, can never be

safe; nor does it avail an offender to be concealed from others while he can never be concealed from himself.

He never opens the door to the least vice, for fear others which lie in ambush should come after: he is much of the nature of the sun, which passeth through many pollutions, yet remains pure as before: rather than do an unjust act, he will be food for cannon: let vice be robed in cloth of gold, yet he sees its ugliness.

If I do nothing but what is honest, let all the world know it; but if I act otherwise, what doth it signify to have nobody know it, so long as I know it myself? Sin is its own torment, and the fear of vengeance pursues even those that at present escape the stroke of it: nature hath set up racks and gibbets in the consciences of vicious persons.

He that is guilty of any infamous sin lives in perpetual terror, and whilst he expects to be punished, is all the time punishing himself. Whosoever deserves punishment, lives in expectation of it; what if he be not detected? He remains full of apprehension that he may be so.

The wages of sin is death; those are poor wages that will not even enable a man to live; as virtue is its own reward, so sin is its own executioner.

The soul of a wicked man is like paper scribbled all over with the writings of vice; his mind resembles the city Poneropolis, so called by King Philip after he had peopled it with a crew of rogues and vagabonds. He that looks diligently into the character of a vicious man, will see the canker at his heart through all the false and dazzling splendours of greatness and fortune: a virtuous man can never be really miserable, nor a wicked man happy.

Men love evil in themselves, yet no man loves it in another; and though a man may be a friend to sin,

yet nobody loves the sinner. A thief strives to get an honest servant, and a hypocrite frequents the society of sincere persons.

Mankind is entered into a sort of confederacy against virtue; it is dangerous to be honest, and only profitable to be vicious.

We live in the rust of the iron age; piety itself is in exile, integrity seems to have departed, and the branches of the most flourishing virtues are all lopped; it is as rare in this age to meet with a virtuous man, as it was formerly to meet with a poet in Plato's commonwealth.

It is virtue that makes the soul invincible, and places us out of the reach of fortune, though not out of the malice of it: when Zeno was told that all his goods were drowned; 'why then,' said he, 'fortune hath a mind to make me a philosopher'; nothing can be above him that is above fortune, no infelicity can make a wise man quit his ground.

If I were led in triumph, I could maintain the same calm mind, and be as virtuous and great as the conqueror; place me amongst emperors, or amongst beggars, the one shall not make me proud, nor the other ashamed; I can take as sound a sleep in a hut as in a palace, and think myself as happy in a galley, as in the Elysian fields.

Felicity is not to be found in the veins of the earth where we dig for gold, nor in the bottom of the sea where we fish for pearl, but in a pure and virtuous mind.

Socrates being asked if he did not consider the great King of Persia to be a fortunate man, 'I know not,' said he, 'how he is furnished with virtue': conceive that true happiness consists in virtue, not in the frail donatives of fortune.

Virtue hath a splendid theatre wherein to shew itself in all its varied fortunes; a man that is con-

demned, if he be innocent and doth not vex himself doth exercise the virtue of patience; if he be guilty and doth acknowledge himself to be so, he doth co-operate with justice.

Noble-minded and virtuous men suffer many inconveniences in this world; but virtue, like the sun, goes on her way rejoicing, let the air be never so cloudy.

‘No cloud whats’ever can obscure her light;
Virtue’s a glow-worm, and will shine by night.’

A virtuous person in the thickest of his misfortunes, is like a quickset hedge, the more he is cut and mall-hacked,¹ the better he thrives and flourishes.

A wicked man is afraid of his own memory, and in the review of himself he finds only appetite, avarice, or ambition. Vice hath a first and tentative state, after which it becomes desperate and incurable. All the virtuous actions which I can hereafter do, will no more expiate my former transgressions, than the not-contracting new debts can be accounted payment of the old.

Though Virtue gives a ragged livery² to her servants, yet it is dignified by her golden badge, and you should be proud to wear it.

Those that least practise virtue in their secret doings, cunningly make it appear to be the mark whereto all their open actions speed; for they know that there must be the signature of virtue on the worst of actions, otherwise they would not be allowed to pass and to receive entertainment. Virtuous persons are by all wise men openly revered; and they are even silently respected by the bad,

¹ Printed ‘male-hack’d’ in De Britaine’s text.—H. S.

² Cf. note on page 77.—H. S.

so much do the beams of virtue dazzle even unwilling eyes.

The heart of a virtuous person is a paradise into which the serpent never enters without meeting a sudden repulse. In navigation we ought to be guided by the pilot, in the course of life by the virtuous.

‘Obstrue quinque fenestras, ut luceat domus’; as the Arabian proverb says, a wise and virtuous man shuts his windows that he may see the better.

The smallest defect or fault in an accomplished person, obscures the whole orb of his virtues. He cannot transgress, any more than the sun can suffer eclipse, without every man taking note of it.

A virtuous man is ‘bonorum maximus,’ and ‘magnorum optimus.’ You must labour and climb the hill of difficulty, if you wish to arrive at virtue, whose temple is upon the top of it; it is a great encouragement to well doing, that when you are once in the possession of virtue, you may make it your own for ever. It is easy to continue good and virtuous, but to become so is hard; nature doth not make a gift of virtue, but it must be painfully acquired; and it is therefore a kind of art to become good.

‘Quid juvat innumeros scire atque evolvere casus;
Si fugienda facis et facienda fugis?’

If your mind at any time seems to stagger, and be in suspense as to what to do, fix it on some grave and good man, imagine him to be present with you, and then do all things as if he looked on; then because of the reverence you bear to him, you will fear to offend or to do anything that is ill, because he would find fault with it. If you were but within sight of Scipio or Lælius, you would not dare to transgress; why do you not then summon some

such person, one in whose presence you dare not offend, to your mind?

Every night I call myself to an account, I ask myself 'what infirmity have I mastered to-day?' By this scrutiny I find my vices abate of themselves, and I myself become better and more virtuous.

I shall ever reverence the memory of Chilo, for his 'nequid nimis,' because in those two words he hath taught us the 'summa totalis' of all virtue.

I can be honest in the dark, and virtuous without a witness; I have such an inbred loyalty to virtue, that I can serve her without a livery.¹

Aristippus, being asked wherein philosophers excelled other men, answered, 'Because if all laws were abolished, we should be just and lead the same lives as we do now': indeed, if all men were set upon being virtuous and just, there need be no laws.

Virtue will make you noble without the help of a coronet, and will get you veneration without an apotheosis. It will gain you esteem; and esteem to virtue is like a fine air to plants and flowers, which makes them bloom and prosper.

Let integrity be the ballast of your soul, and virtue the lading; you may be deprived of honours and riches against your will, but not of your virtues unless you consent.

Demetrius Phalereus² had three hundred and sixty statues erected in his honour by the Athenians, for his having governed their commonwealth for ten years with great virtue and prudence: but when he saw those statues which were raised by gratitude,

¹ This is the third allusion in this section to the attraction which a great person's livery had for even rather 'superior persons' in Stuart times.—H. S.

² Orator, statesman, philosopher, and poet. He rose to high honour at Athens by the sheer force of his ability and industry.—H. S.

not long afterwards destroyed by envy, he said, 'they may pull down my statues, but they cannot overthrow my virtues, in honour of which they were erected.'

Exchange not virtue's immortal crown for a whole mine of gold.

'Gold is uncertain ; but what you possess
Is still your own, and never can be less.'

Boccalini¹ tells us of a great prince that had the fortune to meet the Lady Philosophy naked, and wished out of pure modesty and compassion, to throw his royal mantle over her : but that illustrious lady begged his majesty's pardon with all dutiful respect, and gave him to understand that she had no shame to hide, nor any deformity to cover.



SECTION XIII.

Of Friends and Friendship.

TO have one good friend is to own a priceless talisman ; but do you strive to multiply happiness by gaining at least two or three such jewels. Out of your acquaintances choose here and there associates, and bind these to you with the tie of loyal friendship. But let me advise you, never to make a coward your

¹ Trajano Boccalini, an Italian satirist. He died in 1613. The first edition of 'I Ragguagli di Parnasso : or Advertisements from Parnassus ; in two Centuries ; with the Politick Touch-Stone' appeared in London in 1656. Henry, Earl of Monmouth, was the translator, and prefaced it with an 'Epistle' addressed 'To His Countreyemen the Readers.' The anecdote referred to by De Britaine is found at page 43 of the book. The 'great prince' is Francis I. of France.—H. S.

friend, or a drunkard your privy-councillor; for the one will desert you upon the approach of the least danger, and the other will divulge all your secrets; both characters are dangerous to human society.

‘*Quod in corde sobrii, id in lingua ebrii.*’

Never make a friend too hastily; for though sudden affection makes the deepest impression, yet that love is usually the most permanent which dives into the soul by soft degrees of mutual society, and comes to be matured by time; friendships too hastily contracted, like plants which shoot up too fast, are not of the same continuance as those with which nature takes more time. It requires time to consider of a friendship before it be contracted; but the resolution of amity once taken entitles its object to my very heart; I look upon my thoughts to be as safe in my friend's breast as in my own. A friend is your very self, so treat him as such: do but think him faithful, and you will make him so.

Do not make yourself over to too many intimates, for marriage, which is but the strictest of friendships, gives a man only one, and indeed the lesser degrees of friendship admit not of many more: the tide of love cannot rise very high when divided amongst numerous channels, and it is great odds that amongst a bevy of friends we shall be deceived in some; then we shall be put to the unpleasantness of repentance, which is never more irksome and unwelcome than it is in matters of friendship.

He that you mark out to gain as your friend, let him be a virtuous person; for an evil man can neither love another for long, nor himself be for long beloved; and the alliances formed among wicked men are rather to be called conspiracies than friendships.

Any man can become your enemy, but not all men

are capable of friendship; few men have much loyalty of soul, but almost all men are capable of doing their companions some harm sooner or later. True friendship is a sacred thing, and deserves our tenderest acknowledgments. Humanity exists by love; and men make life endurable to one another by friendship, without which the universe would be a more dreary desert than any that travellers have told us of; nor is there any happiness upon earth comparable with that produced by a virtuous union of minds and desires.

Harmony of temper begets and preserves friendship; but disagreeing inclinations are like improper notes in music, that serve only to spoil the concert,¹ and to offend the ear.

Where there is a difference in religion, there is rarely a long agreement in affection; but if I meet with a just and kindly man, let his persuasion² as to religion be what it will, I can put him in my bosom without thinking of the snake in the fable. A friend is a great antidote to solitude, an excellent assistant in the affairs of life, and our best protection against social wrongs; he is a counsellor in difficulties, a confessor in scruples, and a sanctuary in distress. Amongst all human enjoyments, nothing is so rare, so valuable, and yet so much a necessary as a true friend. The Roman losses by water or fire Augustus could quickly supply and repair, but for the loss of his two friends he mourned throughout the rest of his life. It has been said with some truth that all things in the world are but baubles, except old friends to converse with, and old books to read.

A true and faithful friend is a living treasure, in-

¹ The text gives 'consort,' a word formerly used in England both for 'concert' and 'a concerto.'—H. S.

² Belief, creed. The use of this word for 'sect' still exists in country places.—H. S.

estimable while we have him, and never enough to be lamented when he is gone from us; there is nothing more ordinary than to talk of 'a friend,' but nothing in life is more difficult than to find one; and oftentimes one is most lacking where there seems to be the greatest number. The higher in station that a man is, the more need he has of a true friend, and the more difficulty he has both in finding and recognising one.

He has made his first approach to comfort who has gained an opportunity of communicating his thoughts; but he that lacketh a friend to open his grief unto, eats his own heart. With the kindness of my friend I sweeten the adversities of my life; by his thoughtfulness I lessen my own, and repose when weary under the healing shadow of his friendship; when I see any good befall him, I rejoice, and thereby my own happiness is increased. My friend is a counterpart of myself:

‘Dum similis simili sociatur pax fit utrisque;
Ni mihi sis ut Ego, non eris alter Ego.’

I love my friend more than I do myself, and yet methinks I do not love him enough; therefore I cannot but approve the example of that philosopher, who, when he was dying, ordered his friend to be inventoried amongst his goods. When a certain man came to Alexander and asked that he might see his treasure, he told one of his servants to take him, and show him (not his money but) his friends; it seems, therefore, that he put a greater value upon them, than upon all the wealth which he had.

I am much pleased with the ‘Commonwealth of Friendship’ of Pythagoras, and I often wish that considerations of worldly interest could be exterminated out of the family of love; for they tend to

rob us of the happy enjoyment of our friendships and rarely sow anything but trouble and dissension among us. Whatsoever I possess, my friends may command; there is no relish, methinks, in the possessing of anything which is not shared with some other person; if the treasures of the Samnites, or the territories of the universe, were offered to me to keep for myself alone, I would refuse them. A dish of cabbages or beans with my friend is a feast to me; when I eat alone, my table, however well covered, is to me but a manger, and I feel myself to be in a desert. It is a great satisfaction to me to see that my friend is pleased, but it is a much greater pleasure for me to make him so. When I consult the comfort and happiness of my friend, I provide for my own; true friends are the whole world to one another, and he that is a true friend to himself is also a friend to mankind.

A true friend, like a good mirror, will reveal to you your own defects fairly and unflinchingly. Phocion¹ said to Antipater, 'You are deceived, sir, if you would have me for your friend, and yet expect that I should play the flatterer.' I behave myself with a great decorum and singular regard to my friend; but if I see him dash out into follies, I apply reproofs to him, using them as pungent and acute medicines, with no other intent than the recovery of the patient. If my friend falls into any notorious vice, yet even then I keep a regard for him; for though the friend be gone, yet still the man remains; and though he hath forfeited my friendship, yet still I owe him my charity.

It is not so much honourable of us to do a friend a kindness, as it would be unworthy of us to omit a good office when he stands in need of it; for a true friend has absolute rights over our actions.

¹ Athenian statesman and general. Died B.C. 317.—H. S.

Wise friendship is made up of virtue as being lovely; of familiar conversation as being pleasant; and of mutual advantage as being necessary. Behave well to thy friend that he may be more thy friend, and act honourably towards thine enemy, that he may become thy friend. My aim is to speak well of my enemies, but still more to retain my friends. Next to my friends, I love my enemies, for it is usually from them that I first hear of my faults. It is better to decide a difference of opinion which exists between our enemies than one which troubles our friends; for in the latter case, one of the friends will be likely to become an enemy, whereas in the former case, one of the enemies will almost certainly become a friend.

If you have a good friend, beware of desiring for him great riches or honours; for when he has got them, he may gradually relinquish your friendship or even become your enemy: this made the Emperor who had a great friend (who was a Cardinal of the court of Rome) advanced to be Pope, say 'that from being a trusty friend when a Cardinal, that ecclesiastic would become a deadly enemy when Pope'; and it fell out according to the Emperor's expectation. If you do not desire to make a great man your friend, it is sufficient to keep him from being your enemy; indeed, to fix yourself in the favour of a great person, unless he be high-minded, is to be like the mouse that built her nest in the cat's ear. Never seek for a friend in a palace, or judge him only by his behaviour at a feast. There are few friends of the person, and many of the fortune; but a friendship of interest usually lasts no longer than the interest continues, whereas true love is of the nature of the diamond, it is pure, bright, and very hard to break.

Go slowly to the feasts of friends; but make

haste to them in their misfortunes. It is trade, not friendship, that has an eye to competition and profits; friends should not be like the scales of a balance, the one rising by the other's sinking, but rather like numbers in arithmetic, the lesser and greater helping and improving each other.

Never purchase friends by gifts; for if you leave off giving to them, friends thus gained will leave off liking you. Love is built upon the union of minds, not purchased by the bribery of gifts; and the more you strive to bribe, the fewer true friends you will have. But I can admit the exchange of good offices between friends to be desirable, not so much for the sake of the actual benefits given or received, as that friends may have the pleasure of doing kindness to each other. Philip of Macedon grieved much for the death of Hipparchus of Euboea, his faithful friend: when somebody said 'but his hour had come,' Philip answered 'yes, but it came too soon for me, preventing me, as it did, from returning him much kindness which I owed him.'¹ But an enemy is more easily appeased than a friend is assured, by generosity.

Have a care in remaking any man your friend; unless the disruption of friendship came by your own mistake, and you have done penance for it. If the league of friendship be once broken, then the cabinet of secrets is unlocked, and they may fly about like birds let loose from a cage; when quarrels occur between friends, secret enemies that lie upon the watch blow the fire; and when war is once declared, old friends are apt to become the bitterest of adversaries.

When you have made choice of your friend, lavish all reasonable civilities upon him; yet in prudence

¹ Philip *had* made much of Hipparchus, so that the anecdote shews Philip in an attractive light.—H. S.

I would advise you for a long time to behave to him with some caution, remembering that a present friend may become a future enemy.

Aristotle's saying, '*amici non amici*,' makes me think, that he is a happy man, that has a friend in need, but that he is more happy, that has no need of a friend. He is not thy friend that draws thee into anything which tends to become prejudicial to thy reputation or estate; neither art thou thy own friend, if thou dost hazard either of these for another man, save when honour and friendship make it imperative.

Be slow to choose a friend, and slower to change him; be courteous to all, but intimate with few; scorn no man for his humble position, unless it is clearly the fruit of his own wickedness, nor humour any man merely on account of his wealth or place. '*Vulgus amicitias utilitate probat.*' Prosperity does not keep just scales, adversity is the only balance in which to weigh friends.

True friends are like the spirit and the sinews, the one moves with the other; and the love between them ought to resemble '*templum fidei*,' which was constantly clear, had nothing meretricious about it, and was without any coverture.

Honest friendship multiplies joys and divides griefs.

There are persons who resemble Crotto's¹ mouse. When he was in prosperity it always came out and fed when he did; but his house being set on fire, it fled immediately from him; whereupon he, observing the ungratefulness and uncertainty of trencher amity² framed this distich:

¹ Ælius Julius Crottus, the Latinist, or 'Iroldo Crotta' (pseudonym of Count De' Dottori), whose '*L'Asino*' appeared at Venice in 1652?—H. S.

² The 'cupboard love' of village conversation to-day.—H. S.

‘Vixisti mecum, fortunâ Matre, Noverca
Me fugis : At poteris æqua et iniqua pati.’

I never have forsaken a friend, until he hath forsaken himself and virtue (which was the true Lover’s Knot that first united us); and if at any time I renounced intimacy with him, yet in respect of my former familiarity, I retained some thought for him, and wished him well. I do profess myself desirous to be a good citizen of the world, and I have such an aversion to anything that is unkind, that I look upon an injury done to another, as done to myself.

Many a time when I have heard that a friend was dead, have I drowned my eyes in tears. And I could have wept as passionately at his grave as the Grecian matron did over her mother’s urn; but then I considered, that to do so was more human of me than wise; for I might as reasonably have wept that my friend was born no sooner, as that he should live no longer.

‘Dear, beauteous death ! the Jewel of the Just,
Shining no where, but in the dark ;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust ;
Could man outlook that mark !’¹

But we are assured that ‘the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.’

So that I would rather imitate the virtues of those of my friends who are now with God than bewail their deaths. And I know that thus I may go to them, albeit they cannot return to me.

¹ I have quoted Henry Vaughan here instead of letting a quotation of two rather colourless lines stay in the text. The first part of Vaughan’s *Silex Scintillans* appeared in 1650, the second in 1655.—H. S.

SECTION XIV.

Of Frugality and Expenses.

TUDY not only to preserve your estate, but to increase it without loss of integrity: money is the heir of fortune and the lord paramount of the world.

Riches are the keys to greatness, and make the access to high position more easy and open; a man without money is like a tree without a fence which every ass may kick; let your ability be never so great, yet until you have gilt edges, you will be no more noticed in the world than a cuckoo is in June.

‘Vita hominum Pelagus, regina Pecunia nauta est,
Navigat infelix qui cavet hujus ope.’

Hence it was, that there being a contest amongst the most eminent poets for the laurel, and they not agreeing in their award, the matter was referred to Apollo, who upon serious advice gave it to an alderman of London, because to have the most wealth was a sign of having the most wit.¹

‘Jews, Turks and Christians several² Tenets hold;
Yet all one God acknowledge, that is, Gold.’

It is related that a nobleman of Venice paid his court to Cosmo de Medici, Duke of Florence, and signified to him, ‘that he understood that his highness had the philosopher’s stone, and that he desired to see it.’ ‘It is true,’ said the Duke, ‘but my elixir³ is this, never to do that by another, which I

¹ I beg to commend this anecdote of De Britaine’s to historians of the City of London in search of local colour.—H. S.

² Viz. different.—H. S.

³ I leave ‘elixir’ in the text here as illustrating De Britaine’s way of using words in a slightly strained sense (here elixir = talisman or charm) to give variety to the look of his didactics.—H. S.

can do myself; not to do that to-morrow, which I can do to-day; not to neglect even the smallest things.' The Venetian thanked his highness, and took his leave of him; and, by the practice of the Duke's rules, became in time the wisest and richest man in Venice. If you purpose to become rich and wise, take this elixir.

I know that a generous man takes little heed of money, but when he hath it not, he is the very man that feeleth the want of it most; and any very excellent person who is without sufficient means of livelihood, is like a ship which is well rigged, but cannot sail for want of wind. If your resources are but small, go little into society; but when you do mix with the world, be sure that you let your money flow freely.

If your means do not suit your objects in life, pursue those objects in life which are suited to your means. Have a care that you do not copy the mistake of that mariner, who struck his own vessel against a rock and sprang a leak in it while he was labouring to buoy up a sunken ship of another's. Let the wrecks of other men act as sea-marks to yourself. Bartimæus became blind, that others might receive sight; and the moon of Spain fell into an eclipse, that it might give light to many.

Those men who have wasted their own estates, will be ready to help you to consume yours; such persons are like the fox in the fable, who persuaded the other foxes to cut off their troublesome tails, because he had lost his own.

There is a story of a smart reprimand uttered by Queen Elizabeth which I must relate to you. Her Majesty was invited by a nobleman (who had squandered a great part of his estate) to visit his house, which was very magnificent. Over the portal of the great doors was written in capital

letters, 'Oia Vanitas.' The Queen came into the courtyard, and was about to enter the house, when she asked the nobleman 'what that was which was written above'; he told her; the Queen asked him 'what was the reason that he made his "omnia" so short, and his "vanitas" so long?'

I have read that there was once a goddess fastened to an oak in a grove. For a long time she had many worshippers, but when the tree was ready to fall, none would come within the shadow of her statue. Love and respect are rarely found when fortune is lost; and adversity seldom meets with any return of the friendly acts which it did when its name was prosperity. That which we call kindness or affection, is too often only self-interest; and base men profess to love the good and the wise only to serve their own ends.

Charity, though she be a saint, is yet without an altar in the world; you will meet with many men, which have much of the Heliotrope in them, in that they open in the sunshine of prosperity, whereas they shut and contract themselves as the night of adversity approaches, and in the stormy seasons of life. And believe me, none will be such severe critics of you in adversity, as those that in prosperity have been your associates.

Never squander money in the present, in hope of accidental gain in the future. Even merchants, accustomed to risking money, strive to reduce their personal expenses when they adventure goods on any large scale. How foolish will you appear, therefore, if you are extravagant because you expect windfalls from the tree of fortune, and then the wind should not rise.

Money in your purse will gain you credit, wisdom in your head will honour you; but both in your necessity will serve you.

‘Amasser en saison,
 Despenser par raison,
 Font-là une bonne maison.’

A seasonable gathering, and a reasonable spending, make good housekeeping.

The Venetians use an arch of Saint Mark’s Church for their treasury, and their reason is :

‘Quantum quisque sua nummorum servat in arca
 Tantum habet et fidei.’

Balance your expenses by the just weight of your own estate, and not by the poise of another’s spending. It is good advice of the philosopher, ‘measure the stone by your rule, and not your rule by the stone.’ Prodigality is of the nature of the viper,¹ and eats out the bowels of that wealth which gave it birth : frugality and industry are the two horses that can pull our coach to the palace of fortune. Certain young men who were reproved by Zeno for their prodigality, excused themselves by saying ‘that they did but spend what they had plenty of’; ‘would you excuse a cook,’ said he, ‘if he oversalted your meat, just because he had a great store of salt?’ Prodigals may be compared to fig trees growing upon a precipice, whose fruit is not tasted by men, but is devoured by crows and vultures. Prodigality is ever attended by injustice and folly, and dogged by want and misery.

Keep a moderate style of living, and it will keep you ; if you go beyond that which is necessary, you must have first a cloak of velvet, then a cloak clasped with gold, and then a cloak embroidered with pearls, for the habit that once exceeds moderation, is sure to end in some absurd extravagance. A good layer-up makes a good layer-out, and a good

¹ I leave this information unaltered.—H. S.

sparer makes a good spender. There is no alchemy like saving.

Diogenes asked a thrifty man for a half-penny, but a prodigal for a pound; the former, he said, might give often, but the latter would shortly have nothing to give.

Getting is a chance, but keeping is a virtue.

He that is sparing in everything is a niggard; he that spares in nothing is a spendthrift; I love to spare in the things that are least necessary, that I may be the more generous and liberal in what is most required in my station.

He that is lavish in some kinds of expense, must be parsimonious in some others; for he that is prodigal in all directions, will with much difficulty be preserved from ruin, however good an estate hath come to him. Form a habit of reasonable frugality, for that will benefit your character as well as your estate. A man ought warily to begin any expenditure, which when once begun must continue; but as to single demands upon his purse, he may be more magnificent.

By four things is a rent-roll preserved; first, by understanding its amount and capacity; secondly, by not spending any of it before it comes in; thirdly, by frequent reckonings with one's servants; fourthly, by keeping a quarterly audit.

If out of kindness you have lent money to any person, let him not continue indebted to you over long, for the interest of an old debt is usually paid in ill language.

At the first entrance into your heritage keep up a modest state; you may rise with honour, but you cannot decline without shame. Plato, seeing a young man of good family, who had spent all his estate, sitting at the door of an inn, supping upon bread and water, said to him, 'if you had dined

temperately you need never have supped thus.' Many young gentlemen seem to think it good policy to wear their lands upon their backs, perhaps by way of ensuring that no waste be done by their tenants.

Make not the sail too big for the vessel, lest you sink it.

I would advise those who have the world before them to be careful betimes; for it is too late to spare wine when the bottom of the cask is reached and all is drawn out to the very lees. I have known some persons, who have had great estates left to them, to break their fast in plenty, dine in poverty, and sup in beggary.

That which by sparing is saved, may with industry be added to; and out of the gains from what is added, some part may also be saved; frugality alone is but simple getting, but joined with industry it is compound getting. The way to much is by a little: for the greatest sum which can be imagined, has the unit of a penny: it is worth your while to reckon how much the man got for his horse who sold it for a sum of double the price of each nail in the beast's shoes reckoned from the first nail at a half-penny.

Add many lesser numbers in account,
Your total will to a great sum amount.

A small fortune takes a great while to acquire, but from it a large one is soon gotten; for when a man hath raised his position to a considerable pitch, he may grow rich apace by prudent action.

SECTION XV.

Of Riches.

WAS never born to be rich; and that mattereth but little, for the more a man hath, the more he desireth.

Riches would be desirable above all things, if they brought the advantage of contentment as surely as contentment gives us all the advantage of riches. Even if you apply wealth to uses which you believe to be necessary, yet he that needs fewer things than you do is a richer man than you are, and comes nearest to the fulness of God Himself, who lacks nothing.

The gift of fortune is far from uncommon and is sometimes held by the unworthiest of men; but a man's own solid worth is that which begets for him true renown. Nobility and riches are reputed to make men happy; yet these attributes deserve not to be too highly commended, being derived from outside the man who has them. Virtue and integrity, being lovely in themselves, do give a singular lustre to any man, however high his station may be.

Crassus accounted him a rich man, who had an estate sufficient to maintain an army; but he that hath an estate large enough to keep up an army with, had need have an army if he hope to keep together so great an estate. Get possession of the whole earth, and yet (as Archedemus told Philip of Macedon) if you measure your own shadow, you will not find it one jot longer than it was before. When the prophet Zachary, chap. 6, saw the vision of the four empires, he asked of the angel, 'qui sunt isti? What are these?' The angel told him, 'isti sunt quatuor venti; These are the four winds': to shew,

that all the riches and glory of the world are but a blast.¹

Christ himself gave us to understand what esteem we ought to hold riches in, when He gave Judas the bag.

Providence hath placed all things that are for our necessities near at hand, but nature hath hidden gold and silver in the bowels of the earth, and they are mingled with dirt till avarice and ambition part them.

To be contented is to be rich ; and contentment is an estate that any man that wishes may make himself master of. To have become rich is not so much to have increased your estate, as to have retrenched your desires. You are not rich or poor so much according to what you possess, as according to what you desire ; for he is not rich that hath much, but he that hath enough ; nor is he poor that hath little, but he that craveth for more. He to whom a little seemeth not enough, will think a great deal but little. The bravest minds might be content with very little ; but they are apt to think that a great deal is due to their quality, and so they make others bestow a good estate upon them.

If you have more than you use, you have more than you need, and your wealth is only a burden to you ; if, then, you are solicitous to increase your possessions, you shew that you have mistaken where your profit lies. Nothing is really your own, but what you yourself make some use of ; indeed all that a fool does with the greater part of his riches is to hold them as a kind of treasurer for their next owner.

Consider the life of man, how full of anxious thought it is ; first he thinks of how to get a livelihood, and then of how to keep it ; next comes the

¹ Of wind. I have inserted this sentence almost unrevised as it is worth comparing with Zechariah vi. 4, 5.—H. S

adding to possessions, and after that the devising how to preserve and defend them; and yet in the end, the man and his money alike are dispersed.

The man of property, what with his desire to add to it, and his fear of losing any portion of it, lies exposed to all the assaults of chance. Whereas the poor man may feel rich even in his poverty, if his desires are squared to his necessities; for in that case he fears nothing ardently, having so little to lose. The fear of losing our riches is a great vexation, but the loss of them is a greater; yet even this loss we consider more troublesome than in reality it is. And a covetous man will lament bitterly for the loss of what he never had save in imagination.

It was avarice that made theft so capital a crime; it having with us a greater punishment allotted to it than adultery; I know of no reason why adultery should not be punished with death as well as theft,¹ except this, that whereas man considers his wife to be only flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, he values his coin as the soul of his soul.

Moral courage, which is an almost universal medicine for the distempers of the mind, contributes no more to the cure of this frenzy of covetousness (for a frenzy it becomes if once indulged) than St. Bellen's key did to the cure of mad dogs, when the priests burnt them on the forehead with it. In the whole pharmacopœia there is no formula wherewith to cure this disease.

The New World hath in a manner outdone the old; for it hath sown covetousness in our minds, and hath quite extinguished love and kindness amongst men; for all are wretchedly in love with

¹ As Blackstone mentions, in 1764 there were 160 capital offences in the statute book. At the beginning of this nineteenth century the legal penalty for purloining five-shillings-worth of goods in a shop was death.—H. S.

gold. A covetous man seems to live on a liberal scale when you look at his large possessions, but he is in reality a niggardly wretch, as you will see when you consider how small a portion of his resources he uses or enjoys.

Riches well-gotten are neither to be despised nor over-valued; but he that grows rich at the cost of his integrity is a heavy loser by his bargain. Nature hath not confined happiness to positions of high fortune; I can laugh and spend my time merrily, although I am neither Duke nor Baron.

To desire little makes poverty a kind of riches; he who has unsatisfied needs is not rich; nor is he who is contented with a little, poor. Riches are best measured by their usefulness to their possessor; what is necessary to a man is really riches to him, more truly than large possessions would be, which bring cares and dangers. Prudence will gain any man the things which are necessary, and then he is endowed with all the riches he ought to desire. A little money will suffice us to live comfortably upon, and we can die happily without even a little.

It is usually better for a man to have enough worldly goods, than to have large possessions. For if he has much, he desires more, that is, he has not enough to please him; whereas he that hath all he wants, is contented, and therefore hath advanced himself further along the road of happiness than the rich man hath.

Alexander, after all his conquests, complained that he wanted more worlds to conquer; he desired something more, even when he had obtained all; and that which was sufficient for humanity was not sufficient for one ambitious man. It is better to have learned the truth of the saying of Cleobulos,¹ that 'a middle state of things is the best,' than to

¹ One of the seven sages of Greece.—H. S.

wear an imperial crown, or to gain the rich mines of the Indies. For so you may come to be rich through poverty of desires.

I consider no man to be richer or greater than myself, unless he is more virtuous and contented than I am. I value the ass of Apuleius no more for his gold, than I do the great horse of Alexander for his trappings. What are riches and honours, but a kind of superficial gilding or varnish, meant to dazzle the eyes of children and fools? I desire to live in this world, so that it hangs about me like a light garment, and does not clip me like chain armour.

The point in which a rich man should think himself more fortunate than a poor man, is the largeness of his opportunity of doing good to his neighbours. Riches and greatness add nothing to a good man's value, but they serve to illustrate his virtues.

Would a courser that is adorned with trappings of gold and purple, and carries a victorious general in triumph to the Capitol, take pride in the arches, the shouts and acclamations of the people? Would it not rather complain of its accoutrements, which are more burden than ornament? For gold may be glorious, but is certainly heavy. Alas, my rich friend, there are few that run after you, but many that run after your fortune; few make obeisance to you, the bows of the many are meant for your rank; the share allotted to you, as to the steed in the triumph, is the toil and the burden.

Riches were invented for the easing and conveniencing of life, but man has perverted them into a cause of the greatest troubles and vexations. The greater the riches, the greater the cares; and oftentimes, the greater the losses. No man is richer than a poor man who is content; this I myself, who have not much of the world's goods, do find to be true. For while I preserve a quiet and serene

mind, I possess the choice treasures of the universe.

All men are idolaters, some of fame, others of riches; I bless my stars that I never bowed the knee in the temple of either. Money is useless to me, except so far as it supplies my wants; it was made to serve me, therefore I never condescend so far as to be subject to my servant. My soul is too noble an apartment to be filled with trash; it is a monstrous folly to be in love with dross.

Themistocles, finding himself tempted to gloat over some money, blushed at his error, and said, turning to his servant, 'take thou that money, for thou art not Themistocles.' Bias¹ made himself rich, by abandoning his goods; and his 'omnia mea mecum porto' hath raised for him a glorious pyramid of honour to all posterity, and hath set him under a canopy of immortality. Tacitus observes that Vespasian would have equalled the greatest of the Roman heroes, if his avarice had not lessened his other virtues. Perseus,² out of love to his treasures, lost them and his kingdom also; he came to be led in triumph, in company with his coffers, by a Roman general,³ who, in spite of his glorious achievements, is remembered as having died almost a beggar.

That was a fine speech which Evander made to Æneas:

'Aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum
Finge deo.'

The rich man lives happily, so long as he uses his riches worthily and in moderation; and the poor man, who patiently endures his wants, is rich

¹ One of the seven sages of Greece.—H. S.

² Last King of Macedon, an avaricious and treacherous character.—H. S.

³ L. Æmilius Paulus Macedonicus.—H. S.

enough. When I see a poor man drink out of his hollowed hand, I feel inclined, like Diogenes, to throw away my cup; and I often wish as Crates did 'that the stones were bread, as the water is drink,' so that we might have a certain provision by nature.

What is beyond that which is purely necessary to me is useless for my purposes; if I have a groat in my purse, I am a debtor to providence for its kindness; if my clothes are sufficient to defend me from heat and cold, and my house weather-tight enough to protect me from wind and rain, I have no right to ask for more; if I have other advantages, it is my part to receive them thankfully, without esteeming them essential. I covet neither the treasure of the Samnites, nor the delicacies of Apicius; neither would I, if I could, like Dionysius the Sicilian, reward those who could invent any new pleasure.

I am not ambitious, like Scipio, to be 'Magnus,' nor, like Fabius, to be 'Maximus'; nor do I hanker after great honours or possessions, but look upon them as pretty things which Fortune throws to men, just as we do toys and sweetmeats to little children. Now and then I please myself by handling one which some accident has flung even within my reach, while others are struggling and contending who shall get the most.

Abundance is a trouble, want is a misery, rank is a burden, preferment is a danger, but a competency is a cause of happiness. I have as much as I desire, if I have as much as I need; and I have in reality as much as the most, if I have as much as I desire. I sometimes pride myself on this contentment, not by way of belittling my neighbour, but in order to shew gratitude to my Maker.

He lives well that lives in peace; and he is safely great that is great in virtue. A wise man does not

pride himself upon land or possessions, since man is born lord of all the world; he will not appear to lessen his right to this sovereignty by glorying in such a small part of the earth as falls to his share.

I am not much delighted with the festivities and entertainments of the world; I can treat them as kings do great banquets, that is, I can look upon them, taste them, and then go away. There was no magic in that beautiful face of Dareius's lady, which could have enchanted me; neither could the eyes of Cleopatra have triumphed over the powers of my soul, as they did over Cæsar and Antony. For this I am beholden to my Stars; Saturn was ascendant at my nativity; I am but slow and dull, yet I can say at any time with a good heart that verse which Cleanthes hath made famous, which hath been rendered

‘Quocunque voles, Jupiter, me ducito,
Tuque necessitas.’

For a wilderness to me is as pleasant as the Land of Promise; my mind can find a hermitage everywhere; and in the most numerous assemblies of men, yea, in the greatest cities, I frequently find myself in a desert.

When I hear the nightingale sing in a wood (whither I often retire) I do envy her happiness, because she is perched upon the pinnacle of her highest felicity. Free from care and toil, she is entertaining herself in her solitude with her own music and warbling notes. Contentment is the elixir¹ of my life, the true Philosopher's Stone which infuses a golden tincture into all inferior metals, and it cures all the diseases of my soul by reducing it to a right temper.

Of all persons I esteem those to be most happy

¹ Compare a similar use of this word on page 87.

who have their property in the shape of their own hands, I mean labourers; for though they never gain much, they are sure never to need more than a little. However, let me advise you to make use of your property while you live, for when you die you may have to leave it to your greatest enemies, persons who wished for your death before it came. And when you are dead, you are no more concerned as to what you have left behind you, than you were when you were alive as to the number of the sheep in Tartary; therefore bend your mind to getting a sufficient revenue, and when you have got it, use it liberally.

What folly it is for a man to feed his heir and starve himself, leaving behind him a taint of avarice on all his money. And perhaps the heir has been the first to mock at the old fellow behind his back for not getting any fruit of enjoyment or gratitude from his money.

Many times, with Chaucer,

‘I scratch my head where it doth not itch,
To see men live poor to die rich.’

I have often observed some men to enjoy less happiness in their riches, than others do in their poverty.

‘Ambitiosus honos, et opes, et fæda voluptas,
Hæc tria, pro trino numine, mundus habet.’

I am of the opinion of Thales, that it is not improper for a philosopher to be rich if he wishes; but a man must not learn philosophy in order to be rich, but must get riches in order to have time to learn philosophy; for to the poor the wonderworld of the universe is never opened, though he who hath seen into it can afterwards afford to be poor, being a favourite of nature.

Honours and Wealth are the two wheels upon

which the whole world moves; and so these are the two sources of the discontent of most of us.

I desire not great wealth, but such an amount of money as I can obtain justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and part with calmly.



SECTION XVI.

Of Ambition and High Position.



AMBITION is never so high but that she still hopes to mount; and that station which once seemed to be the top of the hill of life, is now to her but a step above which she has ascended; and what seemed so grand to her when she did but aim at it, seems little to her now that she has reached it.

He that is a tribune wishes to be a prætor, the prætor wishes to become a consul; neither reflects upon what he was, but only looks forward eagerly to what he hopes to be. Ambition explains Ixion's wheel, Phaethon's chariot, and the wings of Icarus, three things imagined by the poets; owing to ambition, three parts of the world could not fill the three corners of Cæsar's and Pompey's hearts.

'Hæc Crassos, hæc Pompeios evertit, et illum,
Ad sua qui domitos deduxit flagra Quirites.'

The whole world had not elbow-room enough for the ambition of Alexander. Ambition puffs a man up with vanity and folly: he that is ambitious will be tormented with envy to see any man get in front of him; for to the eyes of ambition he that is not first seems to be last. Some men are so ambitious that they had rather become base than fail to become great.

When Julius Cæsar competed with Q. Catulus for the pontificate, his mother dissuaded him from the contest; he told her: 'that ere night he would be either the greatest man in Rome or be banished out of it.' I do not desire to rise to the pinnacle of glory, for that is but to undertake a voyage to the moon, from which planet I can hope to gain nothing better than the danger of its influences. He who flies too near the sun of glory, will find that ambition will melt his wings.

An ambitious man will do anything to rise; and when he is up, he must do some pretty bad things to enable him to keep his place. And since ambition rides without reins it often ends with a bad fall. God gives wings to the ant, that she may destroy herself the sooner.¹ And many men, like seeled doves,² strive to rise higher and higher, they hardly know whither; little considering, that while they mount to the apex of greatness, every step they take is on the pavement of risk, and that their fall, how gentle soever it be, will be one from which they will never rise again. Let it be your ambition to be wise, and your wisdom to be good: reject the allurements of faction and sedition, and you will be safe like a ship in harbour. A wise man, like the sphere of Empedocles, is 'teres atque rotundus.'

What is glory, which the ambitious man seeks after? It is but a short-lived ephemera; it is like a rose which in the evening makes its tomb of the crimson beauty which in the morning was its cradle; and where is that earthly dignity which the next

¹ I leave this information unrevised.—H. S.

² To 'seel,' in falconry, was to close the eyelids partially or entirely by passing a fine thread (or small feather) through the lids. Nares quotes the use of the verb by Shakspeare (in 'Macbeth' and 'Othello') and mentions that the 'Arcadia' of Sidney and other books refer to doves mounting higher and higher until they fall from mere exhaustion.—H. S.

moment may not find laid in the dust? The fortunes of the greatest men run not up the helix¹ that still enlargeth, but on a circle; when arriving at their meridian, they decline into obscurity, and fall under the horizon again.

The world is a comedy, the best actors are those that play their parts most naturally; but the wisest do not always appear as kings or great lords, and they are seldom the heroes in the play. Preferments and honours are not given by merit, but by favour, and fortuitously: Philippe de Comines tells us, that at the battle of Montlhéry which was fought between Lewis the XI. of France, and Charles Duke of Burgundy, some officers lost commands, because they fled, which were bestowed upon others that fled ten leagues beyond them. As a proof of how men rise by favour, take this instance: Luynes,² from being only a gentleman about 1600 A.D., was made a duke, a peer, and Constable of France within a few years of that date.

Euripides, when his father told him that he had become a knight, replied, 'Good father, you have that which every man may have for his money.'

How many players have I seen upon a stage who seemed fit to be noblemen, and how many noblemen have I met with who seemed fit only to be poor men such as those players were. Yes, Fortune does such things; she makes some men guests of her chariot, who if they had their deserts would be but lackeys to her ladyship. The wisest heads are not always the greatest favourites of fortune; it is satisfaction enough for them to deserve, as they may not enjoy, the favours of fortune; being enriched with higher donatives than those of chance, they can view with

¹ Spiral line.—H. S.

² Charles, marquis d'Albert, premier duc de Luynes, favourite of Louis XIII.—H. S.

a careless eye the cockades and toys which please lesser minds.

Many times it is with statesmen as with scales, 'gravia descendunt, levia ascendunt'; but the latter kind are like apes, in that the higher they mount, the more they reveal their nakedness; and at the best they have but the royal stamp impressed upon base metal; for the king may grant them honours, but cannot make them honourable. He who groweth great suddenly doth often lose in virtue by the change: and extraordinary favour shewn to men of weak or bad character doth breed insolence in them, and discontent in others, two dangerous humours in a state.

When you are mounted to the zenith of glory, the least wrong step may cast you down to the nadir of misery and infelicity. Consider in what great honour and reputation Parmenion lived with Alexander, Aristomenes with King Ptolemy, Aratus of Sicyon with Philip of Macedon. What an illustrious and renowned official was Aetius, and in what favour, and enjoyment of authority, he lived in the days of the Emperor Valentinian! Consider, I say, the sorrows and infelicities which these gallant persons gained by their noble actions and services; they were men that had seen the scenes of some of the greatest actions in the world, yet every one of them might have said,

'Tantum mihi præmium laborum
Est sapere et paenitere.'

'And now for all my labour what's the prize,
But late repentance and to grow wise?'

Men in great places must meet with some strokes of misfortune, owing to the turbulence of the times in which they live. As the highest mountains are

most subject to the storms of thunder and the battery of hail; so persons who occupy high stations seem to be set up as butts for envy and malice to shoot arrows at. Those who are culminant and in the orb of glory must consider that the favour of kings is perilous; it is a difficult thing for a man to walk steadily upon smooth ice, and if his feet begin to slip, his own weight will bring him down. When he is fallen, a whole volley of accusations is discharged at him; every action of his is examined and dwelt upon according to the temper of his critics; and he will be fortunate if he does not hear of more faults than he actually has.

Demosthenes, after having long held office in the commonwealth, is reported to have confessed to some friends who came to visit him, that if, at the beginning of his career, two paths had been set before him, the one leading to the tribunal of authority, the other to his grave—if he could have foreknown the evils, the terrors, the calumnies, the envies, the contentions, the dangers that men in high place must as a rule meet with—he would rather have shewn alacrity in posting on to his sepulchre than to his greatness.

‘*Plenitudo potestatis est plenitudo tempestatis.*’

A man of high position has need of a generous measure of patience wherewith to steel himself against the calumnies and malice of others; and it will be prudent of him to have some ambitious person about him who may serve as a screen to keep off the indignities and affronts which may be offered. He that has advanced himself to grandeur, must necessarily suffer from envy (which is the canker of a great success); for a person of rank often appears to men to be like some giant tree in a wood, which by casting a great shadow, hinders

the young saplings from increasing. Great rank sows envy among the grandees, and despair among inferiors. High place being desired by many, it is unavoidable that he who has attained to it, should for his advancement be envied by many, and for his authority be hated ; though he manage affairs well, yet other men persuade themselves that they might be better handled, and fearing that public affairs may in time be manipulated to suit them even less than they now do, they plot the ruin of the man whom they censure. Those who hold a high position in public affairs, are ever a mark for the arrows of those aspiring persons who deem themselves lower in employment than they are in merit. In fact, great personages may succeed in keeping themselves from faults, but not from envy and slander.

The malicious are never without some secret trains and mines wherewith to rain envy and hatred upon the favourites of fortune and upon the great. He that occupies a great post, had need have as many eyes as Argus wherewith to watch events, as many hands as Typhoeus wherewith to manipulate and arrange things, and as many arms as Briareus wherewith to defend himself against calumny and malice. Greatness stands upon a precipice, and if prosperity pushes a man ever so little off his balance, misfortune usually sends him down headlong, and dashes him to pieces. It is much safer and quieter to live upon level ground, and not to aspire to sovereignty by laborious climbing up the craggy rocks of ambition.

The ascents to honours and great places are often by winding stairs, and it is rarely that there is not some mixture of good and evil methods used by the climber : if you act impartially in your position, you displease the crowd ; if unjustly, you sin against God ; and it is sad to see that more men of high

position are punished by their virtues, than for their vices.

‘How desperate is our fate,
What hazard do we run !
We must be wicked to be great,
And to be just, undone.’

Those that are carried away by the whirlwind of ambition, when they are raised to great place, adopt as their motto ‘*sursum corda*,’ and the first thing they remember, next to their pride, is to forget all their friends ; this made an Italian gentleman write to a great friend of his upon his advancement to be cardinal, ‘that he was very glad of the preferment for the cardinal’s own sake, but was sorry that he himself had lost so good a friend.’ The ambitious man, in order to mount to the place of honour, cringes to all people ; but usually, as soon as he has mounted to it, he takes his revenge by huffing everybody ; his position requires that he should be accessible to all men, but his pride and ill-humour make him acceptable to no man.

Ambitious men are of all men most miserable, for they are wholly taken up with expectation of future things ; and being uncertain of everything, are perpetually afflicted with mental anxiety and alarms ; and at last perceiving that they are denied most of the gratifications, which their hopes held out to them, they become grievously dejected. Cares and infelicities are attendants-in-ordinary to greatness ; high regions are never without storms, and high rank is ever laden with troubles and cares as a great ship is with bales and casks. If those that are nearly mad with the desire of honours and great offices, could but look into the hearts of those that now enjoy them, how would it startle them to see the hideous anxieties and responsibilities which wait upon ambitious greatness.

It is true, that great men have now and then great pleasures, but they cannot escape heavy and anxious thoughts, even in their enjoyments; their felicities are full of disquiet, and rarely what they seem; and they have need of one festivity wherewith to mitigate the burden of another. Each misfortune of men of high rank, usually procures them as much discredit as if they had been perfidious in their practice, and their unhappiness at it is attributed to guilt. The most illustrious position, how glorious soever it is in show, hath at the bottom of it only anxiety and care: princes, palaces, and temples of honour, are but empty names.

He that is in a public position is bound to be a good servant to the public interest; otherwise there may be said to him what the old woman said to Hadrian the Emperor, 'renounce then thy place, as thou dost thy duty.' Men in high office are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the entanglements of public business, have no time to attend to matters concerning their own private welfare: for '*in magnâ fortunâ est minima libertas.*' A life without rest is wearisome, like a long road whereon there is no inn.

The front of the Palace of Honour is splendid and magnificent, but the back parts are not so. The entrance into dignities is garlanded like a victory, but the exit is often tragical, and he who goes in by the gate of favour, not seldom comes out by the door of disgrace.

It is strange to see men seek authority and lose liberty, to see them seek power to control the actions of others, and lose the time and the power to control their own. The rising into a high place is laborious, and by their toils they come only to greater toil, and by gaining dignities often come to endure indignities. What is grandeur but '*speciosa molestia*'? They

who look upon a diadem, and admire the lustre of the jewels set in it, may see something that delights their eyes; but could they understand how many cares are lodged and concentrated within the pale and circle of that crown, I may say, in the words of a great king, that 'they would scarce take it up for the wearing, though it lay in their way.' It was no doubt a sad experience which wrung those words from Cæsar's mouth, 'when you would express a mass of cares and crosses, cogita Cæsarem, think upon Cæsar.' And though you see kings sending out great navies, commanding legions, and compassed about with faithful guards, yet you must not think that they all live peacefully, and partake of real pleasures, for all those glories which you see are but ridiculous pageantries and unreal dreams: fears and cares are not things that are afraid of the noise of arms, nor stand in awe of the brightness of gold, or the splendour of purple, but things that boldly intrude themselves into the hearts of princes and potentates, and (like the vultures which the poets talk of) gnaw and prey upon their hearts.

What are all titles of honour? They are nothing but a mere glorious sound: though equipages of honour may seem splendid and illustrious, yet our understanding tells us that they are only externals. When we put off this robe of mortality, walk among the stars, and from the theatre of Heaven look down upon earth, how surprised shall we be to behold the palaces of princes, the pageantry of the court, the ants of ambition, and the butterflies of rank!

I am a man of no title, yet I appear great, and cut a good figure in my own microcosm, because I am master of myself.

It is wisdom in him that hath been exalted in the sphere of honour, and hath done things of some grandeur, to secure the credit of them by with-

drawing from public life in time; a continuous prosperity always suggests some sudden downfall to come. It is the policy of a cunning gamester to leave off playing while he is a winner; since the progress of prosperity is but a game, and nothing is so certain in it as ill-luck sooner or later. It is better to sit down with honour, than to stand at the mercy of the changes of inconstant fortune. Charles the fifth, that eldest son of glory, triumphed over the world by his good luck, and at last by a glorious retreat, triumphed over fortune, by moderating his ambition. Fortune is like pirates that wait for vessels till they are full-freighted, the counter-plot must be to take refuge in some port betimes.

I much honour the fine sentiment of that Roman, who said that he had obtained all dignities before he coveted them, and had left them all before they were coveted by others. I desire no honour nor preferment, for that would declare that I prefer more what others can bestow than what I possess myself; nothing can make me greater than the being virtuous; I am high enough, if I stand upright; I was not born under Sol that I should love honours, but under Jupiter that I should love business; humility shuns honours, and is the way to honour.

I am not ambitious to have a rich mausoleum when I am dead, a stately sepulchre for my body, or a beautiful urn for the repose of my ashes, or that my name should be engraven in brass or marble; if providence shall bless me with a little stone to cover my remains, I desire that this word may be engraven upon it as my epitaph

‘Evasi’

since I have escaped all honours.

There was a dainty smooth brook betwixt a wood

and a meadow, that served both birds and beasts for a common rendezvous, as well for convenience of drinking as for pleasure. Among other acquaintanceships there was a mighty kindness struck up betwixt an ermine and a heron, and much did they pride themselves upon the plumes of the one and the fur of the other. As they were one day discoursing upon this subject, there happened to pass by them a cavalier, bravely mounted, and accoutred in a coat of velvet lined with ermine, and a velvet cap turned up with a tuft of heron's feathers. 'Pray notice that blade,' says the heron, 'how he vapours in our livery.' 'Aye, aye,' says the ermine, 'that coat of his has cost my family dear;' 'so it has,' says the other, 'and it makes my very heart ache to think how many of our people's lives have been sacrificed to that wretch's vanity and pride; but they that have no friends at court, no influence with the eagle or the lion, must sit down with their loss, and hope to find no remedy except patience.' 'But yet keep up a good heart for all that,' says the other; 'for there is One who is higher above them than they are above us, One who will avenge our cause when we least expect it.'



SECTION XVII.

Of the Art of being Happy.

TO be happy is to be in a blessed condition, and to be in one that every man may come to if he pleases. If you wish to be happy, correct your imagination by reason, avoid theorizing, and live according to nature.

Tranquillity of mind and repose of body are the complete felicities of life.

Happiness consists, not in sovereignty or power or great riches, but in a wise regulation of your affections, and in the direction of all your actions according to right reason. There are two principal diseases of the mind, desire and fear; self-restraint is my buckler against desire, fortitude my cordial against fear: the one guards the mind, when it is attacked by vicious desires; the other heightens its puissance when it has been depressed by fear. It is reason which rescues us from the hurly-burly of desires and fears, which teaches us temperately to sustain the blows of fortune, and shews us all the paths which lead to tranquillity and happiness.

So marshal your habits, that you cut off all vain desires, and contract yourself within the boundaries of nature, which are the limits of your necessities; these are so few and small that hardly any unkindness of fortune can rob you of them. Those who covet things useless and superfluous, enjoy not even those that are necessary; every place yields enough for necessaries, and no kingdom is sufficient for superfluities; it is the mind that makes us happy in a desert or unhappy in a palace. It is the infelicity of many men to covet the greatest things, but not to enjoy even the least; desire of that which we neither have nor need, takes from us the true use and fruition of that which we have already.

I always set before me that Delphic oracle 'nil nimium cupito.' Whatsoever I desire, I always obtain; because I desire nothing but what I can acquire. Where our desires are unreasonable, we must expect disappointments. To be moderate in your desires is a mark of prudence; but be not like Sannio in the comedy, 'spem pretio emere.' I am never anxious for what I have not got, but rather

rejoice over what I have. He is richest who is contented, for content is the wealth of nature.

I can be as content, and think myself as happy in a galley as in a palace; nothing is so pleasant to me as a serene and secure state of mind, one not distracted by any alarms of passion. A contented mind is worth more than all the spice and treasure of both the Indies: and he that is master of himself in an innocent and comfortable retreat, enjoys all the wealth and curiosities of the universe.

An inward peace of mind does more than atone for the want of outward felicity. I do not envy the happiness of others, because I am contented with my own lot. I covet nothing; I had rather beg of myself not to desire anything, than of fortune to bestow it: if I might have the whole world for the asking, I should not long for it.

What are riches? Riches are but ciphers, it is the mind that makes the integer; what am I the better for a great estate, if I am not contented with it? The desire to increase it would quickly take away all the delights and comforts derived from the possession of it; Alexander upon his imperial throne, with a restless and an ambitious mind, was in a worse position than Diogenes in his tub.

He that does not think his own estate, however little and humble it is, to be sufficiently ample, though he should become Lord of the whole world would always be miserable; for misery is the companion of want; and the same foolish idea which first persuaded him that his own estate was not great enough, will end by persuading him that the delights of one earth are not sufficient for him. If in the lottery of the world it is my fortune to draw a prize, I am not proud of my good luck; if I draw nothing but blanks, I am not troubled at my ill-fortune. If all the glories and treasures of the

universe were contracted into one small casket it would not be worth the affection of a noble heart.

Let my clothes be ever so fine and rich (which is the pride of many), they add nothing to my contentment; but much to my humility, when I consider that they were first invented to cover my shame and my nakedness. I can wear a threadbare cloak, with as much satisfaction as if it were new, and made of the finest wool; I never heard that an imperial crown cured a head-ache, or a golden slipper assuaged the gout. A fever is as troublesome to bear upon a silken couch of state, as upon a flock-bed. I feel no need of scarlet cloth, diamonds, pearls, gold ornaments, or rich embroidery, as long as I have stout and easy garments with which to protect myself against the cold and the rain.

He that sets due bounds to his desires is happier than all the mines in Peru can make him. I can be as contented in Ragusa,¹ as in the Seraglio. I value not a Sicilian table to eat at, or Dionysius's chamber of state to sleep in; let me have a dish of cabbages for my dinner, and a truss of straw at night to sleep upon, and I shall not envy the Grand Seignior.²

As a wise man ought not to desire anything that is superfluous, but should confine himself to providing necessities; so a good man must not suffer the tranquillity of his mind to be disturbed by any calamity or adversity whatsoever. Occurrences may make a man unfortunate, but not miserable, against his will. No man can be happy that does not stand firm against all contingencies, and say to himself in all extremities, 'I should have been glad, if it might

¹ This may refer to the life of a galley-slave, or may merely mean 'in exile,' as Ragusa was 'a sort of neutral ground' between Christendom and Turkey, and a kind of 'city of refuge' for persons fleeing from various States.—H. S.

² 'Grand Seignior' was an English phrase for 'Sultan of Turkey' in De Britaine's day.—H. S.

have been thus, or thus; but since it is otherwise determined, God hath doubtless arranged what is better for me.' He that wishes to live happily, must neither rely upon good fortune, nor submit to bad; he must be prepared against all the assaults of fate.

A wise man is happy in any state of life; for he subjects all things to himself, because he submits himself to reason, and governs himself by wisdom, not passion. He that does not make the best of his lot, would not be content in any condition of life; for in such a case the fault lies not in the thing, but in the mind. A judicious man has fortune under his feet; to trouble yourself as little as possible is a useful science, and the source of all the comfort of your life on earth.

I only enjoy that which is present; I take no thought for the future, for that may not come for me; hopes and fears but little perplex me; I rest satisfied with what I have, and by that means lack nothing. I never torment myself afresh with the memory of what is past, nor afflict myself with the apprehension of evils to come; for the one does not now concern me, nor is the other yet a reality; and I may be able to provide remedies against the mischiefs likely to happen, for troubles usually give us warning of their approach by signs which we can discern if we keep a fair watch. It is folly to give way to fear when a remedy exists; he that perturbs himself sooner than he is obliged to do, will also distress himself more than is necessary, for the same weakness that makes him anticipate his misery makes him also exaggerate it; the wise fortify themselves by reason, and fools drag themselves down by despair. It is a ridiculous thing to be miserable beforehand for fear of misery to come; for a man loses the present which he might enjoy, while he is thinking about the future. Nay, the fear of losing anything

is nearly as bad as the loss itself; miseries are endless if we stand in fear of all possibilities. When I am overtaken with a reasonable fear of any misfortune, I a little qualify my fears with hopes; this serves to palliate my distress, while I consider how to prevent the mishap. Never antedate your own misfortunes, it is time enough to bear misfortunes when they come; the ills which you fear that you may suffer, you do suffer by the fear of them; and nothing that you fear, is so certain to happen, as it is certain that many things which you fear will not come to pass. Why should you torment yourself at present, with what may happen twenty years hence? You are the victim of a kind of voluntary disease, you suffer from torments which you yourself invent, if you complain of an affliction that you do not yet feel. It will be time enough to lament when the mischief is come, and in the interim you will do better to assure yourself that it may not come at all; how do you know but that something may delay or divert it?

The Moorish prince Abul,¹ brother and heir to the king of Granada, being imprisoned in the castle of Salobrena, used sometimes to play at Checks² to beguile his misery. That game is a true representation of the game of fortune. One day he had no sooner sat down to play, than in dashes a courier to tell him that he must prepare himself to die; inexorable death always rides fast. The Moor begged him for a respite of two hours in which to play out his game; the commissary thought it too long, but yet

¹ Afterwards Yúsef III., king of Granada. His brother Mohammed VI. had usurped the throne. Mohammed died in 1410, Yúsef in 1425.—H. S.

² Robert of Gloucester calls chess 'chekere,' Chaucer uses the word for the chess-board. 'Chequers' is or was an Isle-of-Wight local name for the game of 'draughts,' which is still called 'checkers' in the United States.—H. S.

granted him the boon asked. Abul played out his game and won both his life and a kingdom, for before the game was ended, another messenger arrived with news of the king's death, and brought for Abul the keys of the city of Granada, which had been sent to him by its magnates.

No man has reason to complain of the miseries of life, since we are all in the same condition ; he that escapes an evil might have had to bear it. Never complain of that which might fall to the lot of any man, when it happens to you. I am prepared against all misfortunes and infelicities, because I expect that whatsoever may be, will be.

Must I be poor? In that condition I shall have company. Must I be banished? I'll think myself a native of my new country ; and the way to Heaven is alike in all places. Have I had any injuries done me? They are but so many robes of honour, which I can cheerfully wear ; out of the greatest infelicities I can make trophies, and raise a triumphal arch ; I have this comfort in my misfortunes, that wheresoever I go, I have the same identity, am in the hands of the same Providence, and carry my virtues along with me.

If I have lost my purse, it was an adventitious possession ; and the less money the less trouble, as the less favour the less envy. Is your treasure stolen? It is not lost, but restored to mankind ; he is a base debtor that counts repayment loss. What is it that I labour, sweat, and beg for? It is very little that I need, and it will not be for long that I shall need anything. Whatsoever happens to me, I am never surprised at ; for I have ever in my thoughts, that whatsoever may be, will be ; and that which may come to pass at any time, may come to pass this very day. All infelicities and sufferings are easy for me to bear, because I make them familiar to

me in my contemplations ; what wonder is it to lose anything at any time, when we must one day lose all? When I see any disaster fall upon another, I conclude that though the calamity fell upon another it may have been levelled at me ; when there are so many thousands of dangers hovering about us all, what wonder is it if one happens to hit me at last ?

Calamity and affliction can never shake or disturb a brave soul. I can patiently undergo the Tympanism of the Greeks or the Petalism¹ of the Syracusans;² and can triumph more in the constancy with which I bear my sufferings, than be concerned about the pain which I endure ; for examples in this matter I am beholden to those gallant heroes, Metellus³ who betook himself into exile resolutely, Rutilius who suffered banishment cheerfully, Cato⁴ who suffered death unflinchingly. The Bull of Phalaris⁵ and a bed of roses are all one to me ; I must confess that while I was in the bull, by reason of my body, I should drop a tear, and send forth a groan ; but my soul would be anchored above all grief and pain.

It is the characteristic of a great mind to triumph

¹ If the reader has forgotten what 'tympanism' was he will perhaps be 'happier not to know.' 'Petalism' was the voting, for the banishment of a person, upon olive-leaves. 'Petalisme' as an English substantive is (? first) found in Sir Thomas North's '*Plutarch's Lives*,' the first edition of which appeared in 1579. De Britaine probably had a copy of some edition of North's translation, the edition of 1657, possibly ; he often refers to Plutarch's facts.—H. S.

² 'Athenians' in De Britaine's text.—H. S.

³ Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus.—H. S.

⁴ M. Porcius Cato, who committed suicide in a most determined manner in the year B.C. 46.—H. S.

⁵ Probably De Britaine's ideal 'wise man' (who is supposed to be speaking to Edward Hungerford and other young men in such passages as this) would hardly have thought of beds of roses while being burned alive in the tyrant's brazen bull.—H. S.

over all misfortunes and infelicities. He that gallantly encounters the misfortunes and infelicities of life, is as valiant as Hector, and may enter into competition with Caesar on the score of his virtues and bravery.

All the maladies of life, even if they be of long continuance, have their mutations, and give us some intervals of ease; if they are short and violent, either they dispatch us, or consume themselves; so that either their departure makes them tolerable, or our departure puts us where we forget them. Misfortunes and troubles should not break or even disturb a courageous heart, any more than those rods hurt the skins of the noble Persians, which whipped their cloaks instead of their bodies; a noble soul must resist all attacks steadfastly, as great rocks do the waves of the vast and tempestuous ocean. Misfortunes are a kind of discipline of humanity; there are tempests and hurricanes in the life of man, and it is prudent to put into a safe harbour to let them blow over.

If you fall into any great misfortune, disengage yourself from it as well as you can; creep through the bushes where there are the fewest briars. They who least shrink from the storms of fortune usually prove to be both virtuous and victorious in the end. When I find that any mishap has befallen me, there are two remedies wherewith I may abate my discontent (if I have any); diversion of my thoughts from the disaster is the one, and the application of my mind to those things which I know to be sensible and pleasant is the other. I always raise my mind above the clouds of life; its tempests then cannot actually reach me; I am not shaken with their blasts, nor deafened with their thunder.

The discontent which we draw from any misfortune, is not so much produced by the trouble

itself, as by our opinion of its magnitude, and so the mishap becomes great or trivial according as we estimate it. They have real misfortune, who believe that they have it; if our judgment were right and sound, we should never be much moved at any infelicity; for almost all misfortunes come from without us, and touch us chiefly because of the opinion of their importance which we choose to form.

I have a ship at sea, laden with a rich cargo; and this ship is wrecked in a wild storm, and I know it not; in that case I am not a whit less cheerful and merry, than if the vessel were not lost. Is it not therefore evident that it is we who distress ourselves, and not our disasters which hurt us? For if the nature of the event hurt me, then, at the same minute wherein the ship foundered, my mind would be struck with the sense of the loss of my goods; and a similar experience would be gone through at the loss of any other valuable possession.

It is the part of a wise man to foresee misfortune and if possible to forestall it—the part of a brave man to vanquish it if it comes.



SECTION XVIII.

Of the Regimen of Health, and of Temperance and Sobriety.

BLATO, when he returned to Athens from his travels, was asked by the philosophers there, if he had seen any notable thing in Trinacria, which is now called Sicily. He answered, ‘vidi monstrum in naturâ, hominem bis saturatum in die.’ This he said, because he had seen Dionysius the tyrant, who first invented the

custom of eating a meal at noon and then partaking of another meal ere night. In ancient times men used to sup and not to dine; all nations in the world did eat at night, only the Hebrews partook of a meal at noon. We heap suppers upon dinners and dinners upon suppers without intermission; it costs us more to injure our digestions than would keep us in excellent health. 'Vita nostra est instar comoediae,' our life is like a comedy; the breakfast is the prologue, the dinner is the interlude, the supper is the epilogue.

We do not eat to satisfy hunger, but to gratify a love of display; we are dead while we are alive, and our houses are so much our tombs, that a man might write our epitaph upon our very doors; we are poisoned by the very pleasures of luxury, and betrayed to a thousand diseases by the indulging of our palates. Every man is his own Atropos, and by his intemperance holds out a hand wherewith to cut the thread of his life. Excess may be good physic upon occasion, but it is bad as a rule of diet; give me the man that takes his food as a sick man does medicines, merely for health's sake. The aphorism of Tiberius is good, 'that every man is his own best physician,' and his life set a 'probatum est' to it. Observe Cato's rule, 'eat to live, do not live to eat.' At our tables we pass the barriers of nature, and sally out in search of superfluities; insomuch that nowadays only beggars content themselves with what is sufficient to satisfy hunger.

Pulse and leguminous food formed a great part of the dietary of our forefathers before the flood; and the Romans who were called Pultiphagi, fed chiefly on pulse for six hundred years. Many other nations, as the Japanese, Chinese, the African tribes of sundry regions, and the Turks, live chiefly on rice and fruits, yet they live very long and healthfully.

It is a pleasant hunger that eats herbs, and a dainty thirst that drinks water. When Dareius had a cup of cold water given to him, he received it thankfully, and professed that it was the best beverage that ever he drank in his life; but peradventure Dareius was never actually thirsty before.

I value not Persian luxuries, the delicacies of Apicius, the Calydonian wine, nor the fish of Hyrcania; the coarsest meat and drink afford me no less pleasure than the greatest delicacies; barley-bread and water make up a delectable repast if they are set before us when we are hungry and thirsty. Artaxerxes, the brother of Cyrus, being defeated in a battle, was constrained to sit down to a meal of dried figs and barley-bread. When he had tasted them he found them so good, that he seriously lamented his misfortune in having been so long a time a stranger to that great pleasure and delight which simple food yields, when true hunger meets with it in the open air.

Temperance enhances our enjoyment of meals that are pleasant, and increases their pleasantness; and ordinary fare is made equal in flavour with the greatest dainties. For my own part, when I eat coarse bread, and drink water, or sometimes even (when I have a mind to add to my ordinary dietary) augment my commons¹ with a little cheese, I take delight in what I feed upon, and bid defiance to those overrated pleasures which accompany the magnificence of feasts. If I have no more than maize, lentils, boiled barley, and clean water, I think my table so richly furnished, that I dare compare my felicity even with that of Jove himself as it is depicted by the poets.

I must confess, as to my diet, I am not very fastidious; if I lived in France I could eat their

¹ *Sic* De Britaine.—H. S.

dishes of frogs, toadstools,¹ and snails : when I am amongst the Jews, I can eat locusts and grasshoppers and think them to be pleasant viands : and to speak freely to you, if I were amongst the cannibals I could without any disgust eat man's flesh, for all things are in everything, there is bread in flesh, and flesh in bread.

Happy is the man who eats only on account of hunger and drinks only because of his thirst, who lives according to nature, and by reason, not by example. He provides for use and necessity, and not for ostentation and superfluities. If mankind would only attend to the needs of nature, without gaping after superfluities, a cook would be found as needless a luxury, as a soldier is in time of peace ; we may have necessaries upon very easy terms, whereas we put ourselves to great exertion to obtain the wherewithal for excess.

When Ada Queen of Caria sent Alexander sauces and sweetmeats delicately prepared by the best cooks and artists,² he said, 'I have better confections of my own, viz., my night-travelling for my dinner, and my going-without-dinner for my supper.'

The Thracians, when Agesilaus marched through their country, presented him with corn, geese, sweetmeats, cheese-cakes, and all sorts of delicacies both of meat and drink ; he accepted the corn, but commanded them to carry back the rest as they were useless and unprofitable to him. When they importunately pressed him to take all their offerings, he ordered the gifts to be passed on to the Helots (the slaves) ; and when some bystanders asked him the reason of his action, he replied, 'that they who were of the profession of arms ought not to meddle with such delicacies,' and 'that whatsoever suits the taste of slaves, cannot be agreeable to free men.'

¹ Mushrooms.—H. S.

² *Sic De Britaine*.—H. S.

The more simple the diet is, the better is the chyle; for rich meats and strong drinks beget diverse spirits,¹ which carry on a warfare amongst themselves. By an abstemious diet, the strength of the body is supported, the spirits become more vigorous and active, the humours of the blood are attenuated, crudities and obstructions are prevented, many infirmities are checked and kept under, the senses are preserved in their integrity, the stomach is kept clean, the appetite and digestion continue good. If you have as many diseases in your body as a bill of mortality contains, this one recipe of temperance will cure them all.

The Caridians,² by reason of their singular temperance and sobriety, are free from an infinite number of indispositions whereunto other nations are subject; nay, they are so vigorous in extreme age, that when a hundred years old, they commonly beget children, and have no gray hairs. The present population of Egypt, who are observed (by Alpinus³) to be very fat men, owe much, he considers, to the medicinal virtue of the waters of the river Nile, and to their diet of rice, pease, lentils and white cicers⁴: and we read in the first chapter of the book of Daniel, how pulse and water made the Four Children fairer in countenance, and fatter in flesh, than those who fared sumptuously upon the king's meat. The Persians, in their time the most

¹ An explanation of the use of this word by medical writers of De Britaine's day would require too long a note, but the reader will easily perceive the general meaning of the sentence.—H. S.

² ? Carians.—H. S.

³ Prosper Alpinus (Prospero Alpini) was an Italian physician who wrote a great deal about Egypt. He was born in 1553 and died in 1617.—H. S.

⁴ The seeds of one species of the genus Cicer are used in India as food for horses.—H. S.

vigorous and the best disciplined people upon earth, ate a little water-cress and wild mint with their bread, and that was all the victuals that this brave nation used when they made conquest of the world. The Thracian women, in order that they might bear strong and healthy children, partook of nothing but milk and nettles. The Cynic in Athenaeus¹ makes meal after meal of lentils, and prefers that diet before the luxury of Seleucus.

But the economy and order of living, and the scenes of human life, are nowadays much changed from what they once were ; if we live temperately, it is for reasons of ambition and by design, not for the sake of carrying out the intentions of nature. It is related of Pope Sixtus,² that before he arrived at the seat of St. Peter he ate and drank nothing but bread and water, saying,

‘ Panis et aqua
est vita beata.’

But having once enthroned himself in the chair of porphyry he refused to stoop to such coarse fare when it was offered to him, giving his reason in a transposition of his former saying, thus,

‘ Aqua et panis
est vita canis.’

Nowadays, instead of water (which was the chief beverage in the antediluvian world and one very congenial to the taste of mankind) we drink brandy, usquebaugh, and aqua vitæ, which are pernicious drinks if much used ; for they then destroy the ‘ calidum innatum,’ prey upon the roscid juice, change the natural tone of the stomach, the texture of the body, and the crisis of the organs. Then

¹ That is, ‘ mentioned in the ‘ Deipnosophistæ ’ of Athenaeus.’—H. S.

² Sixtus V., probably. He died in 1590. He was a favourite subject of seventeenth-century anecdotes.—H. S.

atrophies, imbecilities of our nerves, and trepidation of our members follow, brought about by disorderly motions of the animal spirits which are excited and agitated preternaturally by the influence of strong liquors.

Wine is an excellent drink if used in moderation ; it is a great refresher of decayed nature, it fortifies the stomach, increases our natural bodily heat, helps digestion, conveys the benefit of the food to all our organs, cheers the heart, and wonderfully refreshes the spirits. The ancients called it '*Lac senum*,' milk for old men ; but in modern experience it is found, that if old men imbibe too much of it, it makes them children indeed. Nothing can have worse results for any man than a habit of constant and immoderate use of wine. '*Sapientia in sicco residit, non in paludibus et lacunis*' ; the abode of wisdom is in a dry region, not among bogs and fens.

Heraclitus left it for a maxim, '*lux sicca animæ sapientissima*' ; a dry light makes the wisest mind ; but it becomes '*madida et macerata*,' once it is steeped in the spirit of wine. Strength and beauty are the jewels of the body, temperance and prudence weave a garland for old age. 'Wine,' to quote an Italian saying, 'has no helm' ; when men have drunk too much, discretion is no longer their pilot nor is the light of reason their compass by which they may direct their actions to a safe harbour.

The vine beareth three grapes, the first of pleasure, the second of drunkenness, the third of repentance. If it shall be your unhappiness at any time to be intoxicated¹ with wine, observe the directions of the school of Saturn.

'Si nocturna tibi noceat potatio vini,
Hoc tu mane bibas iterum, et fuerit medicina,'

¹ De Britaine's text has 'overtaken,' the old euphemism for 'drunken' which still lingers on in country speech.—H. S.

‘ If over night thou tak’st a dose,
And findst thyself amiss ;
Thou must next morn another take,
No remedy like this.’¹

Sobriety is the charm which will secure you against all distempers, and make life pleasant to you ; for it is from the seeds of intemperance that the harvest of diseases springs. By sobriety there is a good and perfect concoction made ; the meat you eat, when it’s well elaborated and transmuted in such manner as is proper for each digestion, then a good habit of body is established ; the mass of blood hath its pure tincture, all the liquors of the body have their peculiar properties suitable to the intention of Nature ; but if the crasis of the parts be perverted by intemperance, then the alimentary juices do degenerate from their purity, the mass of blood and the nervous liquor are depraved, and the whole habit of the body disordered.² Abstinence plucks up the cause of all diseases by the roots, in the inward veins it takes away the Butomia, which is caused by the ill disposition of the stomach, and that melancholic humour, which is seated in the tunicles thereof, and reduces the natural temper to a just mediocrity. Temperance makes men end their days as easily as a lamp goes out, for men who have lived temperate lives die in extreme age from mere exhaustion of the vital powers, and depart hence without grief or pain.

If the world is a miracle of order, if our life depends on the harmony of natural laws, it is no wonder that order should preserve life and disorder destroy it.

¹ This advice hardly accords with the other ‘ counsels ’ of this section.—H. S.

² I have left this long sentence and the one following it as they stand in De Britaine’s text *minus* unnecessary capital letters.—H. S.

We may easily prove by experience that a spare and simple diet contributes to the prolongation of life. He that would like to eat large quantities of food, let him eat little, because by eating little he prolongs his life, and so eats largely before he has done eating. The Emperor Augustus died at the age of seventy-six, in all which time he never took aperients or was bled, neither did he use medicines; but once in every year he entered the bath,¹ once in every month he took an emetic, once in every week he forbore to eat at all for a day, and on every day he walked for one hour. If you wish to have constantly vigorous health, to enjoy a perpetual spring-time of youth, practise temperance. Members of the sect of the Essenes among the Jews, by reason of their simple and abstemious diet, usually extended their life to the period of a hundred years. The Stoics and Cynics are said by Laertius² to have been very long-lived. There was once a priest who was made a dean, and by reason of his spare diet lived to be one hundred and eighty-six years of age. When he died this epitaph was written for him,

‘Hic jacet Edentulus, Canus atque Decanus,
Rursus dentescit, nigrescit et hic requiescit.’

I do think that man, if he lived according to nature, and duly observed the regimen of health, might live to an astounding age; for man is naturally immortal, that is to say, he hath a ‘posse non mori,’ as appeared before the Fall and will be evident after the general resurrection. Yea, after the Fall he could live nearly a thousand years;³ though by

¹ Viz. ‘took a course of medicinal bathing.’—H. S.

² Diogenes Laertius, ‘author of a sort of history of philosophy’ (several editions of which were printed in the sixteenth century), was a Greek philosopher.—H. S.

³ ‘And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years’ (Gen. v. 27).—H. S.

degrees the span of life was shortened, yet that abbreviation of life was accidental, and consequently may be repaired in whole or in part; and upon search we shall find that the accidental cause of this abbreviation was the lack of a true regimen of health, and not in accordance with the will of Heaven. And if Adam after his fall had eaten of the Tree of Life, he would have lived for ever; and this doth appear by the words 'lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.'

If the 'humidum radicale et calidum innatum' be kept in their right state and proper condition (as they may be) I see not (for anything that is in nature) why man should not be able to extend his life to a marvellous age. I have lived in the reign of five¹ kings, yet I can by no other calculation than that of my sins be found to be old; by reason of the regularity of my life, I am blessed with a perpetual Spring. My body has never met with an Autumn, or known anything of the fall of the leaf; but vigour and strength like the sun in its glory visit all my limbs; after partaking of a slight repast, I find that I have sound and quiet sleep all night long, and at peep of day I get up as fresh as the morning itself.

The cause of all our diseases and of the shortening of human life, is the excessive eating of flesh and of other foods. How many warlike nations and strong cities, that have borne without defeat attacks or sieges, has not luxury overcome? Consider the Romans when they came to indulge in their 'Jecur Anserinum,' their 'Porcus Trojanus,' 'Sumen,' 'Ficedulæ,' and their generous wines called 'Caecubum' and 'Falerna.'² It was then that they became

¹ *Sic* De Britaine's text. The edition of 1689 has 'four.'—H. S.

² *Sic* De Britaine. The finest amber-coloured Falernian wine was named 'Falerna,' it seems.—H. S.

effeminate, and it was by these luxuries that they were more overcome, than formerly by their greatest enemies. There are many impressions and alterations made upon our bodies by the food which nourishes them, so that foods gradually change the constitution into something especially akin to themselves. Those who eat of the flesh of a cat¹ which has been provoked into a fury by being maltreated become rabid, and like cats will lacerate one another with their claws. Chickens fed on sour grapes are tougher of flesh, and more difficult of digestion, than are most water-fowls. Why are the inhabitants of Tartary so barbarous in their manners, unless because they eat and drink the flesh and blood of horses? Eating of creatures which have no blood, wastes ours; plants which are barren or fruitful (as Porta² observes) render those that use them barren or fruitful. If so, how careful ought we to be what meats and food we eat.

But if you wish to eat flesh, I would advise you not to dress it in front of the fire as cooks do, for that sunders the best from the worst,³ which latter we choose; but do as philosophers do, practise a quite contrary method, take the best which is now lost, and leave that which we now take which is the worst. This is the way, I say, to strip off all the grossness and foulness of flesh which is the seed of all diseases. For the virtue of things taken from them by separation, is more wholesome than when it is left with their bodies. If nature could be

¹ De Britaine's warning may possibly be intelligible to some of the lesser potted-meat purveyors.—H. S.

² Giovanni Battista della Porta of Naples was a voluminous writer. One of his books was translated into English, and published in London in 1658 under the title of '*Natural Magick*.'—H. S.

³ Does this mean 'wastes the gravy'?—H. S.

nourished some other way than by eating, all danger of diseases would be prevented.

There was a person of high standing who once told me 'that his grandfather, by reason of his great age, had had his digestive faculties so enervated, that whatsoever he ate turned into crudities and obstructions; he being a person of great knowledge, tried many experiments to repair it, but without any effect; at the last, he applied a piece of raw flesh to his stomach, and fastened it to it; and then once in every twelve hours applied a fresh piece; in some time he found nature abundantly satisfied therewith, and had a rejuvenescency and renovation of all parts, and lived many years after in good strength and vigour, without eating or drinking anything.' How far this statement may approve itself to the judgment of wise men is worth enquiry: we certainly have observed with regard to drinking, that all the time we sit in water we never thirst, for Nature doth suck and draw in aqueous particles through the pores wherewith to satisfy thirst; and why therefore cannot Nature draw from flesh a '*succus nutriticus*' which will support and preserve life? And therefore physicians prescribe nourishing injections to their patients, and baths of milk in hectic fevers, when the body is extremely low. Paracelsus tells us, 'that to his knowledge, a man lived without hunger for half a year at a time, by applying fresh sods to his stomach.' Nature is able, in all parts of the body, to draw through the pores such nourishment as we need; otherwise how comes it to pass that many persons have lived a long time without eating any food? The air is full of balsamic dewy atoms, and is ever sprinkled with a fine foreign fatness, which may perhaps be sufficient food to nourish the finer part of our bodies, whereon the health of man and his life depends. It is impregnated with a

saline spirit; in this salt are included the seminal virtues of all things; it is a pure extract drawn by the beams of Sol from all bodies which he darts his rays upon, and it is sublimated to such a height of perfection, that it is homogeneous¹ with all things, and, in effect, is the spirit of life, not only to plants, but to animals also. Licetus² and Quercetan³ thought that they were nourished by the air. Olym-piodorus the Platonist assures us, that he knew a person who lived many years, and in his whole life neither fed nor slept, but only stood in the sun when he wished to refresh himself. If other creatures, whose life hangs upon the same peg as ours, do fast a long time, there is no reason why Nature should not allow man to do so.

* * * * *

This discourse of temperance will be looked upon as an extravagant fancy, and I myself have the same opinion of it; but yet it is admitted by many learned physicians that men and women have lived many years without eating any food; I must confess that it is wonderful to me that death did not follow the taking away of the appetite.

¹ Viz., 'homogeneous.' 'Homogeneous' is found in Cowper's 'Task.' De Britaine's text gives it as 'Homogenial.'—H. S.

² Doubtless Fortunio Liceti, a learned Italian physician; a man of most brilliant gifts, but fond of fantastic ideas.—H. S.

³ Joseph Duchesne, seigneur de La Violette, called 'Quercetanus.' 'On peut même dire que c'est Duchesne qui inaugura en médecine l'ère de la chimie, l'emploi des médicaments de nature minérale.' Duchesne graduated at Bâle in 1573, was physician to Henri IV. after he left Geneva in 1593, and died at Paris in 1609.—H. S.



SECTION XIX.

Of Law Suits.

IF you desire to lead a happy life, and to have time for the improvement of your property, let me advise you to avoid suits of law; if you engage in any, you put yourself into a House of Correction where you must labour stoutly to pay your fees. If any case is decided in your favour, you will find that there are those who will tell you that a successful action is a delightful sport in itself, so that you must give them leave to divide the stakes. If it shall be your misfortune to be a party to any action, be careful indeed if your opponent is a rich fool; for no one can give more trouble in a law-court than a rich obstinate fool in the hands of a cunning knave. Beware of employing an able lawyer who has but little business on his hands, for he may lead you a fine dance at your own cost. Beware also of underrating any opponent, for a small mouse may give disturbance to a huge lion.

Once upon a time two lawyers very passionately pleaded their clients' causes to the great satisfaction of those innocent gentlemen; after the verdict was given, the two lawyers were seen to come out of court and to behave in a most friendly manner to each other; the clients saw this going on and greatly wondered at the lawyers' exchange of courtesies; one of them asked the lawyers 'how they could be friends so soon.' 'Tush, man,' said one lawyer, 'we were never foes, for we lawyers are like a pair of shears; if you open them and then close them, they seem to cut one another, but in reality they only cut that which cometh between them.'

You remember the fable of the vulture which sat upon a tree to watch the lion and the bear fight, with the intention of preying upon whichever beast got killed ; take care that you do not illustrate the moral of that story. It was good advice of Christ, 'if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also ;' the reason is evident, lest the lawyer should come between and strip you naked, even of your shirt.¹ To go to law is like taking tickets at a lottery, or playing at dice, in that, if the game be obstinately pursued, the stake-holder is commonly the winner in the long run.

I say not all this in order to reflect upon an honourable profession to which I shall ever pay a great tribute of respect. I know that there are many excellent persons who are lawyers, and if it be your fate to have to do with lawyers, may it be your good fortune to meet with them. In the state of Venice, some years since, all the advocates were nobles, to the number of twenty-four, appointed by the Grand Council. They each had an allowance from the state, being forbidden to take presents or money from their clients, in order that the high rank of the profession might not be lowered, and that in all cases it might be their interest to procure a prompt decision.

But you will be sure, in every market place in the country, to find some fairies, elves, or little spirits with hawking bags or snapsacks² by their sides wherein they have their familiars. Some of these familiars wear green coats, others have yellow vests, and they are sent forth to the disquiet of good men, as Æolus let loose the winds (which he had gotten

¹ I have left this strange sentence in the text, as showing one of the puzzles contained in 'Humane Prudence,' for its tone is not at all that of the writer of (say) section ii.—H. S.

² A 'snapsack' is a knapsack. The word is obsolete.—H. S.

into his bottle) to the disturbance of the world. These are like the sun in Aries, which moves, but does not remove the humours :

‘ Et pluet super eos Laqueos.’

‘ And it shall rain snares upon them ’: which a rabbi interpreted to refer to the multitude of advocates, proctors, and solicitors who were snares to catch the people. Certainly these elves are much of the nature of an ant, very useful to themselves, but exceedingly pernicious to the garden of a commonwealth. If ever you should fly to these for succour, as sheep do to bushes in a storm, you will be sure to leave a good part of your coat behind you. These, like a quartan ague, will never leave you, until they have wrung you dry ; and if you have occasion to make use of them, they will no more stir without a fee, than a hawk will without a lure. I have often wondered at the taste of a nobleman in France who delighted much in troubling men with law-suits ; Lewis the French king hearing of this, offered to deliver him from his law-suits, by expediting the decisions upon them ; the nobleman ‘ thanked his Majesty,’ but earnestly besought him ‘ to leave thirty or forty suits undecided wherewith he might merrily pass away the time.’

‘ Humours are men’s Religion, Power their Laws ;
Their Wit Confusion, and their Will their Cause.’

My advice to you is, that you seriously employ yourself in the study of the laws of this nation (they being most renowned for their justice and wisdom) if not with a view of practising the law, yet with an intention of gaining a sufficient knowledge of it, wherewith to defend yourself and estate from the Robbin¹-Good-Fellows of it. If you be not so dis-

¹ I have not the heart to rob De Britaine of this pun.—H. S.

posed, you must save one-third part of your revenue with which to protect the other two-thirds, or else assuredly you will be undone. There was once such a controversy betwixt the two hands, that the left commenced an action against the right, for taking precedence of it. The court was for the plaintiff upon the point of equity, but the defendant having been in possession of the privilege time out of mind, insisted upon pleading prescription, which accordingly could not be overruled. 'But now,' says the bench, 'to shew the world the reverence we have for mercy and justice, we shall recommend posterity to see that this iniquity is redressed'; and from that day to this it has been the practice¹ of judges, advocates, attorneys and their clerks, and also of physicians, Court and State Officers, and others that have the fingering of money, to help themselves on both sides, and to use both hands alike.



SECTION XX.

Of Gambling.

EXT to suits at law (which are but jactus aleae) avoid gambling; there is no real enjoyment in it, and it too often does but date from a sordid coveting of that which is another's or a prodigality of that which is your own. It is madness beyond such as can be cured by Hellebore, to risk on the cast of a die the decision as to whether your estate shall be your own or not. If you are not forewarned I can tell you without the help of an augur what will be your fate

¹ An edifying comment upon the phrase 'the good old times of our forefathers.'—H. S.

if you become a gambler. Either the vice will end by swallowing you up alive, as a quicksand does, or if you are a winner, your gains will disappear more quickly than they came, melting like pyramids of snow. The same rashness which gains by gambling nearly always loses by gambling. Believe me, gambling poisons the life and soul of a man more than the seven deadly sins¹; every man who knows the world knows that an inveterate gambler is an incurable madman.

Remember that one honestly-obtained crown in your purse will bring you more happiness than ten crowns ill-gotten or twenty ill-spent. Plato, seeing a young man play at dice, reproved him; when the young man said that it was a slight offence, Plato replied that a habit was no light matter.



SECTION XXI.

Of Marriage.

THERE is one step more necessary to make your life comfortable, and to advance your fortune, and that is, that you should dispose of yourself wisely in marriage. Wedlock is certainly a business which requires grave consideration. Ride not too hastily in search of your mate, for if you do so, at the end of your journey you may find that Sorrow is your inn and that Repentance is your host. If you marry be sure that you espouse a virtuous person.

A wife who is a great beauty, like a fair in a large city, is apt to draw men offering strange bargains.

¹ This is somewhat obscure, as 'covetousness' is one of the 'Seven Deadly Sins.'—H. S.

Do you therefore make choice of your wife by the ears, not the eyes. He that chooses a wife according to the report of his sight, is like a traveller in a strange country who tastes a fruit because he likes its colour, and may presently find himself in torment. Do you consider the qualities of her whom you design to marry, and ask yourself whether she be truly suitable for you. I would not advise you to marry a woman for her beauty; for the beauty of youth is like the colour which Sol throws about him when he is setting, it proves not lasting.

Marry not so much to get a great dowry, as to lead a happy life; yet a pleasant wife without a portion is somewhat like a grand house without proper furniture. In such a mansion you may please yourself by viewing its spacious proportions, but there is nothing within it to keep you warm. When you wed, you will do well to choose a bride from among your equals; those marriages are the happiest the parties to which were first well matched before they came to be married. If a man marries a woman of much higher station than himself, he is not so much the husband of his wife, as he is (without knowing it perhaps) a slave to her portion. Be sure you love the person of your wife better than her estate; for he who marries where he cannot love will be sure to love where he does not marry; and love without a legitimate end is apt to turn to illegitimate love without end. Love is too often the child of folly, and though it is the strongest of the passions it is often found in the weakest minds. Young men are amorous, middle-aged men are affectionate, and old men are doting.

There is a great difference between a portion and a fortune with your wife; for if she be not an excellent woman (let her portion be never so great) she brings no fortune to you. A noble Roman being

asked why he had put away his wife, she being both beautiful and rich, thrust forth his foot and shewed his sandal; 'Is not this,' said he, 'a handsome and finished shoe? Yet no man except myself knows where it pinches me.' It is not the lustre of gold, the sparkling of diamonds and emeralds nor the splendour of the purple tincture¹ that adorns or embellishes a woman, but gravity, discretion, humility, and modesty. A young Lacedæmonian woman being asked by an acquaintance 'whether she had yet kissed her betrothed' answered 'no, but he had kissed her.'

As there is little or no use to be made of a mirror, though it be set in a frame of gold and encased with all the sparkling variety of the richest gems, unless it renders back the true similitude of the image it receives; so there is nothing of profit to a man in a great dowry, unless the disposition, temper, and habits of the wife prove to be suitable to the tastes and needs of the husband, and unless he sees the virtues of his own mind exactly reflected in hers. Choose such a wife as will sympathize with you in your misfortunes, for marriage is just like a ship going on a long voyage, he that enters into it must expect to meet with storms and tempests. When I read that ingenious epigram of Ausonius about the echo, it does most graphically bring before me a talkative prating woman:

'Vane quid affectas faciem mihi pingere, pictor?
Si mihi vis similem pingere, pingere sonum.'

Pheidias made his statue of Venus² at Elis with one of its feet placed upon the back of a tortoise, to signify the two great duties of a virtuous woman, which are to keep at home, and to keep silence.

¹ Viz. 'robes dyed with the imperial colour.'—H. S.

² The 'chryselephantine statue of Aphrodite Urania.'—H. S.

The Egyptian women of ancient times wore no shoes, in order that they might get used to the idea of staying at home.

When Thales was asked by his mother why he did not marry, he said 'it is too soon'; some time afterwards on her begging him again to marry, he said, 'it is too late.' When I think of the anxieties, duties, and drudgery of married life, I sometimes wish that I had been a monk under a vow of perpetual chastity, or that nature had provided for the propagation of mankind without the help of women. The trouble that children give is great and frequent, the comfort that they bring us is small and recurs but seldom. Indeed, it is almost better to adopt children than to beget them; for he who wishes to adopt a son is free to make his choice out of many that are good and virtuous, and to select a lad who is almost certain to please him; whereas he who begets one, takes his chance as to whether the boy will prove a joy or a curse. When Plato saw a youth behaving too familiarly with his father, 'Young man,' said the philosopher, 'would you treat lightly the man who is the cause of your overvaluing yourself?'¹ Every man is more indebted to his parents than to all the world besides; to other persons he may owe much, but to his parents he owes himself; therefore if ingratitude to others be hateful, that which is shewn to parents must certainly be the most horrid and detestable. And let undutiful children be assured, that if they be preserved from the gallows, they are reserved to be tortured by their own posterity.

If you have sufficient means of livelihood, are not in debt, and design to marry, have a care you make not too great a settlement upon your bride out of the revenue of your lands, especially if you have children

¹ Viz. 'having a self to overvalue.'—H. S.

by a former wife; if you do such a thing it will perchance prove more calamitous to your son¹ than any burden of debt which he might incur. Provide for your relict a suitable income, but not one so great as to impoverish your children, for that is to cut to pieces a quick² hedge wherewith to protect a dead one. If you have children it is better to leave them each a suitable legacy with a profession, than great riches without it; for in the one case you encourage (and give opportunities to) industry, but in the other, your money will but act as a lure and draw all the birds of prey to devour your sons. He that brings up his children well, though he leaves them little, has given them much.

Have recourse to a good bishop to satisfy your conscience, to an honest lawyer to settle your estate, and marry into a good family to keep up your influence. When man and wife are unisons in affection there is the best music; there was such an harmony in affection between Ulysses and Penelope, that rather than forsake his dear Penelope, he refused immortality at Calypso's hands. Rubius Celer ordered that there should be engraven upon his monument an inscription to the effect that he 'had lived with Caia Ennia his wife for forty-three years and eight months sine querelâ,' that is, without any difference, complaint, or jar. The ancients placed the statue of Venus by the side of that of Mercury, to signify that the pleasures of matrimony largely consist of the delights of friendly companionship. They who sacrificed to Juno as the Goddess of wedlock, never consecrated the gall with the other

¹ Precisely the experience of a large number of English land-owners in this year 1897. Unless an estate is situated near a growing town, or has mineral or other special sources of increase of value attached to it, rent-charges on it should never be created.—H. S.

² Viz. 'living.'—H. S.

parts of the sacrifice, but having drawn it forth, cast it behind the altar; thereby implying, that all passionate anger and bitterness of reproach should be warned off from the thresholds of nuptial cohabitation.

If you wish to be happy, never have more than one mistress of your affections, one friend in your bosom, and one faith in your heart. Methinks the zeal of that priest did trespass upon his discretion, who in a wedding sermon much commended marriage, but compared the bride to a grave. 'For as every grave,' said he, 'has a *'Hic jacet,'* so when you come to marry, *'hic jacet'* the wisdom of Solomon, *'hic jacet'* the valour of David, *"hic jacet"* the strength of Samson; here they are all buried.' The poets have unhappily represented all the Furies as existing in the form of women; and expressly ordered that the Eumenides should be depicted as *'feminei generis.'* The ill-temper of many women, made Diogenes say, when he saw that a woman had hanged herself upon a tree, 'that it was the bestbearing tree that ever he saw in his life.'

But I can have no liking for such morose cynics, persons who attempt to sully the glory of the richest jewels in the cabinet of nature. I could desire to build a stately temple and burn incense therein to the memory of that excellent Menander in return for his honourable saying that 'a noble woman is a treasury of virtue.' I must confess that I ever had a lofty admiration of that excellent sex, as being the cause of most of the happiness we find in life and the source of the prettinesses of society;¹ and I ever thought, that of all follies in man, there is none more natural than that of gallantry; but I learn from my own experience, that the passion for dancing

¹ De Britaine's phrase.—H. S.

attendance upon fair ladies soon deserts a man of thoughtful humour, and is not found to have led him beyond due bounds of propriety.



SECTION XXII.

Of the Man of Honour.



WHEN you come upon the stage of action, as it is your duty so it will be your glory to deal justly with all persons. Open and honest behaviour is to the honour of human nature ; hate nothing but what is base, fear nothing but what is ignoble, and love nothing but what is just and honourable. If a man of breeding stoops to any low and sordid action, he does but imitate the kite, which usually flies high up in the air, but yet condescends sometimes to come down to the ground for a meal of carrion.

Do injury to none, and so keep your conscience clean ; if you injure others, you deserve that they should follow your example and strive to injure you. Throughout life you will find that innocence will be your best escort, and that your integrity will be a coat of mail unto you. A good conscience leaves the mind free to form great resolutions, and an innocent soul is impregnable. It is less difficult, and much more safe, to keep the way of honesty and justice, than to turn away from it, yet commonly our passions lead us into bye-paths. And be assured, that he who in any one affair lets go his hold of honesty, is but too apt to lose all sense of honour as the temptations of life increase ; and certainly no exposure covers a man with so much shame, as to be found false and unjust. We know also that the

vengeance of God requites all unjust actions with slow but sure payment and adds full interest.

Whatsoever I do, I endeavour to act as if that were my last performance ; and therefore I play my part with care and integrity. I keep in mind no more of life than the moment which is now present ; I forget all that is past, and for the future (with an humble submission) I refer myself to Providence ; what others shall say or think of me, or shall do against me, I do not so much as trouble my thoughts with. I fear nothing, I desire nothing, I marvel at nothing ; yet I do bestow upon myself some approval when I have done a just and virtuous action. But to enrich myself by any sordid means, that is a thing which I dare not do ; for such a course of conduct shews a distrust of providence such as makes me for the nonce behave as an atheist might. I have in my own nature such an abhorrence of anything that is vicious, that if neither God knew when I did ill, nor man would punish it, I would yet not commit sin.¹ I often wish that nature had placed a crystal case-ment in my breast, that every one with whom I have to do might see the sincerity and candour that is in the cabinet of my heart.

Keep faith in small matters, not as cunning rogues do, with a view to being the better able to deceive men in greater ones, but in order that the habit of fidelity may be already yours when you come to perform actions of weight and moment ; a promise is a just debt, which you must take care to pay, for honour and honesty have lent themselves as its securities. Think an hour before you speak, and a day before you promise ; hasty promises are commonly followed by speedy repentance. It was the nobility of character of the old Romans which made them build a temple to Fidelity. Breaking your

¹ 'I' is of course De Britaine's ideal 'wise man.'—H. S.

faith may gain you riches, but will never get you a good reputation here or happiness hereafter. He that breaks his promise forfeits his faith (which was the security) and so is become an infidel unto him to whom he promised. A good answer was made by Monsieur Gorgius, a French captain, who had burnt many of the churches of the Spaniards in Florida, when he was asked why he did so. He told his questioner 'that they which had no faith, needed no churches.'¹ To attempt to deceive one who is not obliged to believe you is wrong; but to cheat one whom your fair pretences have induced to believe you is foul treachery, for this is to attack a man whom you have persuaded to lay aside his arms.

Once upon a time there was a cat which fell into a vat of beer, and was almost drowned; the cat cried out for help, some rats heard her wails, and came and viewed her mishap. The cat begged them for pity's sake to help her out, and then upon such and such a day she would give them a great reward. The rats did as they were asked; when the day appointed for the bestowing of the reward had come, the rats made their application to the cat for the bounty; but the cat answered that she had made no such promise. The rats proved the existence of the promise by their joint evidence. 'Well,' said the cat, 'I do not remember making any such promise, but if I did make it it was when I was in drink'; and thereupon she was so incensed against the rats that instead of rewarding them she fell upon them with tooth and claw, killed several of them, and routed the rest. I can leave you to draw a moral from this tale.

A man's word and the effect of it, ought to be as

¹ This answer is given in the French translation of De Britaine's book as follows: 'Que ceux qui n'ont point de bonne foi, n'ont pas besoin d'Eglise.'—H. S.

inseparable as fire and heat; this the ancients shewed us depicted, when they painted a tongue bound fast to a heart. It is hardly known nowadays what keeping one's word means; if any still practise the art they are apt to pass for old-fashioned folk indeed. Too often great men make promises and men of humble position keep them.

'Pollicitis dives quilibet esse potest.'

'Each man's a Croesus, promises hath store,
But in performance, who's not Irus, poor?'

Eucratides the son of Anaxandrides,¹ when someone asked him 'why the Ephori of Sparta sat every day to determine causes about contracts,' replied, 'in order that we may learn to keep our word even to our enemies.' Look upon good-faith and honesty as the most sacred possessions of mankind, not to be forced aside by necessity, nor corrupted by a bribe. It is the glory of a man of breeding to have so high a mind, that if fidelity was lost in the world it might be sought for and found in his breast. Preserve so much of the noble temper of generous youth as never to desert that which is just; be loyal to a righteous cause even unto death. Where are there noble characters to-day such as were found among our forefathers? Where is that Roman chivalry which obliged M. Atilius Regulus to return² to be a martyr for virtue, rather than stain the reputation of Roman faith? And yet good faith is the only foundation of justice, and justice is the only lasting bulwark of a state.

A good man should account nothing more precious than his word, nothing more venerable than his good

¹ King of Sparta.—H. S.

² To Carthage to be tortured to death. This 'stock instance of heroic constancy' is of doubtful historical value, 'the silence of Polybius' about it being one of the objections to its truth.—H. S.

faith, nothing more sacred than his promise. King Francis the first said 'that if fidelity were banished out of the world, it should be found in his word.' The greatest and best of kings have ever been exact in the performance of their promises. When there was a reward offered by Augustus the Emperor, to anyone who should bring in Croton (a notorious robber and bandit) or his head, and Croton presented himself of his own will, Augustus commanded the sum to be given to Croton which he had promised should be given to whatever person might bring in Croton or his head.

Certainly nothing adds more splendour to the renown of a prince, than that he should keep faith and act according to the wise principle of justice; for all things work together to benefit a prince who has gained a reputation for good faith and honest dealing. It goes a great way towards making a man faithful, to let him understand that you think him so; and he that does but as much as suspect that I will deceive him, gives me a kind of right to cozen him.¹ There is nothing easier than to deceive a good man;² he who never lies is apt to believe whatever is told him, and he who never deceives anyone is disposed to trust others too freely. To be deceived is not always a sign of weakness, for sometimes goodness is the cause of it; have a care not to be so good a man that others may take the occasion of your goodness to be bad themselves, but let the cunning of the serpent go along with the harmlessness of the dove.


¹ Surely not.—H. S.

² De Britaine is confusing real goodness with the rather lazy good-nature of a certain type of unintelligent man, just as many writers (in spite of Milton's warning) confuse 'purity' with ignorance.—H. S.



SECTION XXIII.

*Of the Man of Business.*¹

N business be active and industrious; for many men of large abilities, relying wholly upon their wits, and neglecting the use of ordinary means, suffer others (less able, but more active and industrious) to excel them. Diligence alone is a fair fortune, and industry by itself is a good estate. Industry improves a man's resources, just as idleness wastes them, almost without his knowing it; your fortune may be only that of a younger son, but your industry will make you an heir of entail to wealth.

Æsop's fisher found that he could catch no fish by playing upon the flute, and was therefore obliged to get sustenance for himself by casting his nets and baited hooks into the river. And you may observe that in the heavens the moving planets are of much greater importance than those that are fixed. I cannot commend the wisdom of the Neapolitan gentry, whose prejudice against occupations is so great that they prefer robbery before industry. Action is noble; and not only are the celestial bodies in continual motion, but He that is Most High is 'Purissimus actus'; for besides the contemplation of His own goodness, He is ever at work in acts of providence for, and government of, His creatures. There is nothing in the universe stands² still; though the earth moves not spherically (as

¹ De Britaine uses the word 'business' in this section in the sense that the word has in the phrase 'mind your own business,' rather than in that of 'commerce.' He is in the main referring to the affairs of a landowner and courtier, but makes his precepts as universally applicable as possible.—H. S.

² *Sic* De Britaine.—H. S

Copernicus fancied) yet there is a continual 'motus' in her too; among her productions, the idle man is only a 'mare mortuum.'

I would not have you like the lilies of the field which 'toil not neither do they spin.' I am much pleased with his device, who placed for his *impresa*¹ a pair of compasses with this motto, 'Constantiâ et Labore,' the one foot of the compasses being fixed, the other raised as if in motion. Before you act, it is prudent to think over the matter soberly, for after commencing action you often cannot recede without dishonour; and before you decide, take the advice of some prudent friend, for he who will be his own counsellor is almost sure to have a fool for his client. And that you may act with credit, I desire for you four great qualifications for the rank of 'wise man': (1) A clear innocence: (2) A comprehensive knowledge: (3) A well-weighed experience: (4) The product of all three, viz., a steady resolution.

Resolutions are the moulds wherein actions are cast; if they be made with over much haste, or too much heat, they seldom answer their purpose. When you have fully resolved what course to take in any action, you must not afterwards repent of your decision, or give way to fears about any particular difficulty, for such states of mind will lessen the courage of your spirit; and although some difficulties happen to arise, yet you must believe that every other course would have been obstructed by the same or greater impediments. Yet often it is more prudent to follow the trade-wind

¹ Camden is quoted as saying that 'an *impresa* is a device in picture with his motto or word borne by noble or learned personages.' This word is 'from the Italian *impresa*,' whereas 'impress,' used by Drayton in a somewhat similar sense, is 'from the Latin *impresso*.'—H. S.

of present good-fortune, than to abide obstinately by first resolutions.

A sanguine temperament, urged on by its enthusiasm, does well in the pursuit of visible success; the phlegmatic temperament and its patience do better in a retreat from failures or mishaps. In the conduct of affairs you may shew a brave spirit by going into action; but your wisdom will most appear in securing a retreat with credit, for there is so much uncertainty in all human affairs, that in life that arena to me seemeth best which hath most passages out of it. There is a useful story related to this effect, that when the Turks were about to make an expedition into Persia, the Pashas consulted which way they should enter that land, because of the narrow passes of the mountains of Armenia. Whereupon an officer who heard the discussion said 'there is much ado about how we shall get in, but I hear nobody suggest precautions as to how we shall get out.'

Let me advise you to make the public welfare, rather than your own private advantage, the object of all your undertakings; for by providing for your own particular interest, you may wrong the public; but by effecting good for the public, you must benefit yourself. If success in business doth not at first answer your expectation, let no fumes of melancholy overcome you, but make trial of new expedients and addresses; for he that constantly makes head against the assaults of fortune is almost sure to be victorious eventually and to attain his ends. You must not give up the game because the cards prove awkward. Most affairs have at least two handles, if one prove hot and not to be touched, you may take hold of the other and find that it is more temperate.

Whenever you are doing business, apply your thoughts and mind seriously to it. But do not too

eagerly or passionately rush into a matter or promise yourself success in it all at once, for calmness and caution will leave your understanding clear; and you will then not be too much disturbed if you fail in anything, an experience which must fall to your lot sometimes. When an affair seems about to be turned to your disadvantage, it will be your wisdom to temporize and delay, and to gain what time you can by deferring action, because time may bring some accident or incident which may remove your danger. But if the affair stands as suits your advantage, then it is delay that is dangerous to you, and you must act with secrecy and celerity, which are the two wheels upon which all great actions move. The noblest designs are like a gunpowder mine, in that if they are known they can be easily frustrated. And to spend as long a time in considering business as would serve to dispatch it, is to imitate that musician who spent so much time in tuning his instrument, that he had none left wherein to make music upon it.

If the matter you undertake be of an extraordinary nature, then, even when you have done your best, you cannot ensure success. Remember that the Italian saying makes it part of the character of an Englishman, that when he is to undertake anything, he says, 'I'll warrant you,' but that when he fails in his undertaking he says, 'who would have thought it?' Therefore be circumspect in all your actions, for he who intends what he does is most likely to do what he intends; the ruin of fools is that they never think and act in earnest. The half-doing of anything is worse than the not doing of it at all; and a middle course, in cases of serious business, is of all ways the worst.

As there is no plan so secure but that it has some weak point in it; so there is scarcely any business

in so desperate a condition that it has not some chance of being rescued. It was excellent advice of Tiberius Cæsar, '*non omittere caput rerum, neque te in casum dare*'; adopt safe methods for reason's sake rather than daring ones in hope of luck. Yet some things must be ventured, and many occurrences which are out of reach of the prudence of man may be disposed by fortune so as to bring good results. Certain it is, that he who will trust nothing to fortune, nor undertake any enterprise whose result does not appear certain, may escape many dangers by his wary conduct but will fail of as many successes by his inactive fearfulness. All that a wise man therefore can do is to attempt ventures with prudence, to pursue them with hope, and to bear with patience whatever accidents may intervene.

It will shew great prudence in you to take hold of opportunities skilfully; for opportunity admits of no second thoughts; and to those who have lost their early hopes anything that is future is but too apt to seem better than what is present. In the management of affairs stand not upon niceties and punctilios of dignity, but strive to gain your ends by reasonable compliance; heat and precipitation are fatal errors in business; a sober patience, and a wise condescension, often effect that which rashness and anger would make hopeless. If you have to negotiate a matter with any persons, observe their mood, and (as far as prudence and discretion will give leave) comply with their humour. Suffer them to speak their pleasure freely rather than interrupt them; encourage them to speak on, and they will be very likely out of ignorance or inexperience to let fall something which may be for your advantage. Be pleasant in manner, and create in those with whom you converse the impression that you will do all you can to meet their wishes.

Converse with all men as if they were Christians ; but if you have to do with any stranger,¹ look upon him as one that may prove to be an unjust man (this advice is severe, but it may ensure your safety). If he turns out to be an honest man, he then does but disappoint you agreeably ; and believe me (for I have found it to my cost) nothing will undo you more than to rely too much upon the honourable intentions of other men. And, if possible, order your affairs so that he with whom you are to deal performs first ; when that is done, if you be deceived, you have only to thank yourself. If at any time you shall be overmuch pressed to do anything hastily, be careful ; fraud and deceit are always in a hurry ; mistrust is the right eye of prudence, ‘cavendo tutus.’ Remember the ‘memento diffidere’ of Epicharmus. There is no better antidote against deceit than caution.

When there is too great a facility in believing, there is usually some willingness to be deceived : and though credulity carries with it the appearance of innocence, yet distrust ever retains the realities of strength and safety. The imperfections of other men are of the greatest advantage to a deceitful man ; and men are rarely deceived by others unless they have first deceived themselves by trusting them. To keep people in a state of hope is prudent in business, but to trust them freely is indiscreet ; yet I would have you so to behave yourself to him with whom you have to deal as not to seem to distrust

¹ A ‘native of any country lying outside the pale of Christendom’ seems to be the sense here. ‘A Man born out of the Kingdom’ is one definition of ‘stranger’ which I have found in an old dictionary ; the word is commonly used in this sense in old lists of householders, apprentices, etc. The French-Protestant refugees were often called ‘the strangers’ in places such as Rye or Norwich.—H. S.

him, for that passes beyond incivility to a distinct offence, and naturally makes him become your enemy. In all great actions call many (if you think fitting) to your assistance, but few to your confidence: and if you put trust in any, be sure that you are able to trust yourself most. If you must go out-of-doors, though the weather be fair and serene it is wise to carry your cloak with you; but if it rains, you may decide to leave it behind if you please.

Never suffer any obstruction to lie in the way which may hinder the true running of your bowl. When you have a project in your mind, which you consider may turn out greatly to your advantage, let not yourself be turned from it by the importunity of others; if you do, you will probably live to repent of your fickleness. At such a time, you may let the business of the world be your circumference but you should consider yourself the centre of it. When you meet with a person who is more complaisant or officious toward you than usual, be careful; for perchance he hath some design with regard to you, and either hath deceived you or is about to attempt to do so. A more courteous bearing than ordinary towards a Spaniard gives him immediate suspicion as to his personal safety; the Italian thinks himself upon the point of being bought and sold, when without manifest cause he is better treated than he has been before.

Never put it into the power of any person to deal as he likes with you; if you come to rely upon the tender mercies of others, you are almost certain to be undone in the end; therefore always stand upon your guard. When you engage in any great scheme let it be with your equals, not with those who are much superior in station to yourself; if you combine with the latter class in any undertaking, they will have the honour and profit, and you the toil, and

you will be obliged to rest content with what they will give you by way of recompense. Once upon a time a lion invited a cow, a goat, and a sheep to hunt with him; promising them, that whatever game was taken, should be equally divided between them; they went out, ran down a hart, and tore it into four pieces. This having been done, each of the lion's companions stood eagerly expecting to receive his share. The lion, seeing this, got into a rage: 'I take the first part,' said he, with a terrible voice, 'as your king, the second I claim as being the strongest of us, the third is my due as a small reward of all my pains and trouble, and as for him that shall presume to refuse me the fourth share, I here declare him to be the object of my enmity.' His companions hearing this, without daring to murmur went hungry away.

It will shew wisdom in you to take fair advantage of the failures of other men; for the follies of one man often make the fortune of another; and no man prospers so suddenly as he who succeeds where others have failed. You may make your fortune when you please, if you learn which are your opportunities, and how to take hold of them. Often what we call a man's 'good-luck' is nothing but an attentive observation of the revolution of affairs and the opportunities offered by them. Keep an exact diary of all your actions, and of the most memorable events you hear of or meet with. And if, in the conduct of your affairs, you have been deceived by others, or have committed any error yourself, it will be discreet in you to observe and make a note of the occurrence, and of the defailance,¹ with the means

¹ 'Defailance' is also 'found in a sermon of Barrow's' spelt in the same way, and meaning 'failure.' It is simply an English form of the French word 'défaillance.' De Britaine seems to use it here in the sense of 'unfortunate result.'—H. S.

or expedients which you have had to employ in attempting to repair it; this will make you more prudent and wary for the future. Let all the points of your observation, and your remarks upon them, be committed to writing every night before you sleep, and so in a short time you will possess a dictionary of prudence and experience of your own making. For wise men nowadays begin to be unwilling to merely inhabit the world, and wish really to understand it. And let me tell you, no man is truly wise until he hath been once or twice deceived; and your own errors will teach you more prudence than all the grave precepts or wise examples of others.

Once upon a time there was a great contest between folly and prudence as to which should have precedence of the other; the dispute waxed so keen that they agreed to refer the matter to Jupiter. Jupiter, after hearing what could be said on both sides, at last gave his judgment, 'that folly should go before, and prudence should come after her.'



SECTION XXIV.

Of Counsel and Counsellors.



MOST men find it easier to give counsel than to take it; even wise men are apt to think that they do not need it, and fools will never utilize it. There is no diminution of dignity, no evidence of want of ability, in taking counsel; the grandeur of the greatest person is rather advanced than diminished when he sits down to hear what his counsellors have to say. The counsels of a wise man are the voice of an oracle which foresees things to come and guards the

interests of posterity. It is wise for great persons to discuss with others what they should do ; but it is not necessary for them to declare to their counsellors which plan they intend to adopt ; let them hear the advice of any discreet man, but let the decision come from themselves.

Those persons are not fit to advise others, that have not first given good counsels to themselves and made use of the counsel. The position of a counsellor is one of great trust ; therefore counsellors are under great obligations to shew faithfulness and integrity, and they ought rather to be careful about thoroughly understanding their master's interests, than curious about his humours and desires. Augustus lamented for the death of Varus because, as he said, it left him without a counsellor who would tell him plain truths. 'What is there lacking to a Sovereign ?' asked a flattering courtier : 'Truth,' said the serious king. Heliogabalus begged the advice of a counsellor, who thereupon gave him advice which did not please him : 'How darest thou be so plain ?' said Heliogabalus. 'Because I dare die,' said the counsellor, 'I can but die if I give honest counsel, and I must die at some time even though I flatter.' He that gives a prince counsel which does but feed his caprices and desires, puts on one side good sense, which cannot err, and encourages self-will, which may.

A wise counsellor must take notice of trifles, observe whither they point, and advise as to how they should be controlled, for '*optima cujusque rei Natura in portionibus ejus minimis observatur*' ; and often great matters will be found to hang upon fine threads. But never set your heart upon advising a prince in a doubtful enterprise which concerns his State ; for if your counsel be accepted, and the affair prospers, the glory will be his ; but

if the project falls through, after being handled according to your methods, the discredit will be laid to your account. ‘*Consilia senum, hastae juvenum*’ (old men for counsel and young men for execution) passed in old times for a maxim of wisdom : but I think men in the meridian of their years are more fit for counsel or action than aged men, for old men are apt to object too much, to consult too long, to venture too little, and to draw back too soon. The Republic of Venice allows no ecclesiastics to have seats in the council, because of their dependence on the Pope ; and when the notables meet in council, the rule and proclamation is, ‘*Priests withdraw.*’

The true wisdom of a counsellor, is rather to be well versed in his master’s affairs than to consider his superior’s whims ; for then he will be likely to advise his master, rather than to flatter him. Solon was once sent for by Cræsus, and counselled him wisely, but was thereupon dismissed with disrespect ; Æsop, who was much grieved to see Solon so ungratefully treated, said to him, ‘we must either tell kings nothing at all, or what is best for them.’ Everyone is more ready to delight a prince with pleasant conceits than to aid him with profitable advice ; smooth and pleasing speeches, accompanied with little services, always find favour at court ; but to recommend to a prince such conduct as is righteous and desirable is a matter of some difficulty, and often proves to be a thankless office. Those who advise a prince ought to speak as if they merely put him in mind of things which he has forgotten, not as if they are teaching him what he does not know. It is most prudent in matters of debate to speak last, and so to gain opportunities of judging of the opinions of others before you utter your own.

If a prince has several kingdoms under him, it is wise of him to admit representatives of each kingdom to his council; by that means the several nations will rest the more contented, and each nation will wish to rival and even excel the others in smartness of wit¹ and in wisdom of suggestion. When a prince contemplates any great undertaking, it is safest for him first to propound the same to his counsellors separately and in private, ordering them to set down their opinions in writing, with their reasons, and not to communicate the same to others. For in private they will be more free and bold; whereas in the council-chamber some great person or favourite, having once declared his views, may carry the rest with him, '*nemine contradicente*,' and the best opinions may be either concealed, or at least not so well debated. If the prince should meet with any unforeseen difficulty in his enterprise after he has acted upon the secret advice of his counsellors, then let him order those who advised him to discuss and defend their plans in public (as their honour compels them to be willing to do) freely, and without passion or respect to outside opinion; by this means matters will be fully debated and threshed out.

That is the best advice, and ought to be adopted, which can be put in practice with facility and security. Good advice is such as has its foundation in knowledge, has been uttered after mature deliberation, and exposes the person advised to the risk of accident as little as possible; all hasty counsels are hazardous, and usually bear the fruit of infelicity or even of despair. Nothing is more dangerous to great undertakings than the acting upon rash and precipitate advice. Hurry and rashness wreck business, as storms and tempests

¹ De Britaine's phrase.—H. S.

do ships; but caution with promptitude, like a fair wind, will bring it into a haven of success. The chariot of wisdom is drawn by remoras,¹ and its council-table is made of a tortoise shell. King Demetrius² being asked by one of his officers why he would not give battle to Ptolemy, seeing that the strength and number of his army made it much the superior, answered that 'a thing once done, can never be undone; and before a man attempts a difficult enterprise, a long time is needed in which to consider and debate.' Sertorius was highly commended by Plutarch, because he was slow in council, serious in his enterprises, and quick in his execution of them. Great designs must be hung up and gazed at; 'in nocte consilium,' the pillow is a silent sibyl from whence you may receive oracles of wisdom. To sleep upon a thing that is to be done, is better than to be awaked by a thing too hastily done. Agesilaus, that brave king of Sparta, being much pressed to give an answer to the Theban ambassadors, said, 'an nescitis quod ad utilia deliberandum mora est tutissima?' Sudden resolutions are always dangerous, but there is little less peril in a too slow and hesitating decision.

'Cunctatio servilis; statim exsequi regium est.'

It is discreet to presume those to be the best counsels which come from men who advise against their own interest. The Athenians having been victors in the Peloponnesian war, and having conquered almost all Greece, formed a plan of conquering Sicily which was discussed in the

¹ Sucking-fishes, 'fabled to delay ships by adhering to them.' — H. S.

² Demetrius I., King of Macedonia, surnamed Poliorcetes, was usually an impetuous person, full of ideas and eager to translate them into action. — H. S.

Senate of the Athenians. Nicias,¹ who was one of the chief men in Athens, spoke against the project, and said that such advice from him ought to be especially regarded, because if Athens was at peace with her neighbours many of her citizens would rank higher than he, whereas in time of war he would stand highest in the state.

A sober and wise counsellor ought to look through the present to the future, and consider well the consequences of things and what evils may follow this or that decision. (The State of Venice, when its council discusses a project nowadays, allows arguments to be brought forward based upon forecasts of the possible consequences which may ensue from the plan at a remote date.) He must not be like the Phrygians, who assembled their council, after disaster had fallen upon the state, to consult how they might have prevented it. Advice that is bold is usually dangerous, because it is blind and therefore does not see obstacles and difficulties. But boldness in the execution of a plan is an excellent quality; in council it is good to perceive all dangers, in execution not to notice any but very great ones.

With regard to affairs upon which advice is to be given, the good and prudent course is to take things as they are (since the past cannot be recalled), to propose remedies for present evils, and safeguards against future occurrences. A prudent counsellor both consults his experience as to what course is best, and queries the necessity of the case as to

¹ A general whose caution often passed into sheer irresolution (partly owing to his credulous superstition). In the Athenian retreat from before Syracuse he was taken and put to death by the Syracusans. His loyalty to his troops in that retreat, and the religious sense of duty with which he bore up against illness in order to do his best to cheer his men, may be read of in Plutarch's *Lives*.—H. S.

what conduct is fittest. Pericles was wont to say that 'time is the wisest counsellor.' It may be the good-luck of a private man now and then to meet with a sincere and judicious person to advise him, and it is prudent of him to accept the advice thankfully. But great men are not so fortunate, for they are apt to surround themselves with those who flatter and feed their vanity most, and not to come across those who would serve their interest best.

When Xerxes marched with a prodigious army against Greece, he asked his counsellors what they thought of his affairs. One told him that 'the Greeks would never engage in a battle'; another said that 'he would only find empty cities and countries, for the Greeks would not so much as face the report of his coming'; only Demaratus advised him 'not to depend too much on his great numbers, for he would find them rather a burden to him than an advantage.' Demaratus added that 'three hundred men in the passes of the mountains would be sufficient to give a check to his great army; and that such an accident would undoubtedly turn his vast numbers to his confusion.' And it fell out afterwards as Demaratus had foretold. A miserable prince, who amongst so many thousand subjects had but one servant to tell him truth!

That excellent king Alphonsus¹ was wont to say 'that his dead counsellors' (meaning his books) 'were to him far better than the living, for the former, without flattery, fear, or bashfulness presented to him truth without disguise.' However it is not safe for any prince to make changes in his secret Council, and he must especially beware of

¹ Alfonso V. of Aragon, I. of Sicily and Sardinia, and latterly I. of Naples; a brave and generous-hearted man who loved letters and was as much at home in a library as in a camp.—H. S.

displacing men who have been made privy to any of his recent decisions; for counsellors dismissed resemble keys that are lost or mislaid, no sense of security remains to the owner unless he changes the lock. The advisers of a prince ought to give such counsel as may comport with the dignity and honour of their master, and not such as merely suits the mould of their own mind and fortune. Parmenion, hearing what great offers Dareius made to Alexander, which that prince rejected, said, 'surely if I were Alexander, I would accept such offers.' Thereupon Alexander said, 'so would I, if I were Parmenion.'

After any matter is propounded and well debated in Council, it frequently happens that nothing can be more pernicious than not to come to a speedy resolution about it. The Lavinians being requested by the Latins to aid them against the Romans, put off the decision to act too long, so that when they did begin to march out of the town to give succour to their allies, news came that the Latins were defeated. Whereupon the praetor Milonius said: 'we shall pay dearly to the Romans for this little journey we have taken. If at first we had resolved to refuse to help the Latins, then we should not have given offence to the Romans; on the other hand, if we had promptly helped the Latins, we might have ensured their gaining a victory.'

As nothing is more becoming to a sober counsellor than to advise his prince justly, so nothing tends more to the glory of the greatest prince than to listen to good counsel and to utilize it. The best kind of wisdom is shewn by ability to give good counsel, the next best by willingness to take it. Hence it was that the Egyptians accepted Diodorus¹ as their king; for he was so judicious in giving and taking counsel, and in changing his plans with dex-

¹ *Sic* De Britaine's text.—H. S.

terity when opportunity made it desirable, that it is said 'he could turn himself into any figure or shape.' Hannibal the Carthaginian being in exile advised King Antiochus, when an advantageous occasion offered, to give battle to his enemies the Romans. Antiochus,¹ after he had sacrificed, told him that the entrails forbade it. Hannibal sharply rebuked him thus, 'Sire, you are taking advice from the flesh of a beast, instead of from the reason of a wise man.' It is not so fatal to the commonwealth to have an evil prince and a good council, as it is to have a good prince misled by evil counsellors.

Nothing exhibits the wisdom of a prince so little as to hearken (as some princes do) to counsels given by one of his own way of thinking. Let a wise counsellor advise nothing but what is practicable. Every project that runs athwart prudence springs from a kind of folly and quackery which in matters of politics is the ruin of states; though a plan of this kind may seem plausible it is but a neat² delusion, and will afterwards lose its vogue, when the vanity of it shall be shewn forth by its results. When someone propounded in the Senate of Sparta a project for the freeing of Greece, 'well designed indeed,' said Agis (the son of Archidamus³), 'but hard to be brought about; friend, thy words require an army and treasure.'

Such counsels as are over-subtile and nice are not much to be regarded, because they are seldom brought to a good issue. Hence it is that the Venetians, although they are not so ingenious a people as

¹ Antiochus the Great, King of Syria. The anecdote appears to refer to the incident of Hannibal's advising the king to invade Italy.—H. S.

² *Sic* De Britaine. 'Neat' was sometimes used in his day for 'clever,' 'adroit.' Another sense, that of 'pure' or 'unadulterated,' will also suit the context.—H. S.

³ Archidamus II., King of Sparta.—H. S.

the Florentines, are yet for the most part more judicious in their projects than the Florentines are; and the Lacedæmonians were in this respect more fortunate than the Athenians. For counsels too finely spun are easily broken; and a deeply-laid scheme does not please the impatience of the vulgar, to whom speedy undertakings seem always to be the most heroic; plans that are slow yet sure are interpreted by the crowd as being imperfect or half-hearted projects of incapable or disaffected leaders.



SECTION XXV.

Of Prudence in Time of Danger.

HE who endeavours to do his duty in a wicked age, and strives to be truly virtuous and just (which I wish you always to be), will thereby hazard his fortune and his safety. Believe me, nowadays more men are undone by their virtues than by their vices; and a good man runs more risks than a bad one. A plebeian, speaking at an assembly of the Senate of Athens, suggested that Aristides should be banished. Being asked what Aristides had done to displease him, he replied, 'nothing, nor do I even know him, but it grieves me to hear everybody call him a just man.'

That good bishop Theodoretus was scoffed at by the Imperial Court as a buffoon for being good when virtue was out of fashion, and adjudged imprudent for being a solitary example of a man of principle. In good old times it passed for an oracle of prudence, 'that honesty was the best policy': but in modern practice you will find the maxim run, 'that policy is the best honesty.' To deal justly nowadays, is to

have one's conduct reputed to be a piece of knight-errantry, and a good man is considered but as an Apuleius inverted.¹ Virtue and integrity, when men were mostly good and innocent, were great safeguards to their possessor, but they are merely traps to ensnare those who profess them in a depraved state of society.

If it shall be your infelicity to live in bad times (though I wish for you the best) then I hope you may be the better for them by an antiperistasis.² If the times be perilous you must, like a discreet pilot, trust your bark to the waves which it would endanger you to steer against, and by giving way to them avoid the risk of their assault; then the tempest may strain, but will not rend, your sails and cordage. In order to pass a dangerous wood safely it is sometimes expedient to put on such skins as those beasts wear which haunt that wood. He that acts the part of a beggar to save himself from a thief may by so doing deliver himself from becoming a beggar.

Affect not peculiarities of conduct or manner, but observe the disposition and spirit of the times: for he that cannot change colour with the air he lives in as the Chameleon does, must (like the Chameleon) be content to live only on the air. Be not a member of any faction; a wise man always keeps himself free from such fraternities. To all factions behave with moderation, and so you may derive some benefit from each. Pomponius Atticus was so judicious that men of all factions loved him and vied with one another in doing him kindnesses, and in the midst of them all he dwelt in peace and prosperity. Factions in a state never for long hold their ground;

¹ ? 'as an *Asinus* who is not likely to be *Aureus* in such times.'—H. S.

² Viz., 'intensification (of your own good qualities) produced by the antagonism of surrounding influences.'—H. S.

for if they be not suppressed by the power of the state, they will be ruined by some dissension arising within the party itself. But in popular commotions, if you stand neutral, you will be sure to have the same luck which the bat has, that is, to be pecked at by the birds as a mouse, and to be bitten by the mice as a bird.

I am of such boon¹ courage, that I would rather be devoured by a lion, than done to death by flies. Neither can I rank myself among those persons who act whatever character seems to suit their advantage; like the bird whereof *Leo Africanus*² makes mention, which, when the king of the birds demanded tribute, always ranked himself with the fish; and when the king of the fishes required his services always classed himself as a bird. If any extraordinary infelicity happens to fall upon you, the only way is, not to sit still but to resolve upon action; for so long as nothing energetic is done by you, the misfortune, which causes you such grief, bears your life down; but if you do something, you may deliver yourself, and, at all events, you express a brave spirit by shewing that you dare attempt to do so. But as to that which is out of your power, let it be also out of your thoughts; you may, if you think fit, give yourself much trouble about it, but yet you will be obliged to leave God to govern the world as He pleaseth. If you wish to live comfortably, leave to God the care of mankind and to men their rights.

A lion that had been abroad upon an adventure, and had brought away a savoury bargain along with him, spied a sheep at a distance, quite out of breath,

¹ Viz., 'good' or 'abundant.' Compare the phrase 'boon companion.'—H. S.

² De Britaine's text has '*Leo Africanus*.' Pory's English translation of Giovanni Leone's book on Africa is dated 1600. It has been reprinted recently by the Hakluyt Society.—H. S.

and scouring away as hard as it could drive. The lion cried out to it three or four times to stop a moment, but the poor creature kept running on still without so much as looking behind it; this gave the lion a suspicion that there might be a wolf in the case. And so there was, it appeared, for prying narrowly through the bushes the lion made out a wolf pressing eagerly after the sheep and almost upon its heels. The lion bounded along, got in the way of the wolf, and asked him as carelessly as he could 'whither in such haste?' The wolf answered, 'I am looking out for my supper.' 'If that be all,' says the lion, 'you shall take a bit with me to-night.' The wolf would gladly have been excused; but betwixt good manners and good discretion, he thought it better to fall in with the lion's wish, and so the sheep was saved.

Be harmless as the sheep, magnanimous as the lion, and prudent as the wolf. You will then illustrate the lessons of the tale which I have related.



SECTION XXVI.

Of the Grotto, or Retired Life.



WHEN I retire into my little grotto,¹ which is situated in the midst of a fine wood and near to a crystal stream, I find therein happiness and content beyond any which an imperial crown can confer. From my retreat I

¹ De Britaine may mean 'a cave' made into one or two rooms, a summer-house, or even a cottage (see the first sentence of the third paragraph of this section). The word 'grotto,' more correctly 'grotta,' was used with considerable poetic license during the seventeenth century for any erection, or even space, surrounded or shaded by trees.—H. S.

observe the Lady Flora clothe our Grandame Earth with a new livery, one patterned with pleasant flowers and chequered with delightful objects. When the spring visits us, the dulcet songsters seem to welcome me with their various music as I pass along; the earth sends forth her primroses and pretty daisies to behold me; the air supplies gentle zephyrs wherewith to refresh me. There I find such pleasure, and have such a power of enjoying it, that I could bid adieu to the gardens of Alcinous, Adonis, and Lucullus, and would not envy the Thessalians their Tempe; if I were Epicurus (the master of pleasures) I should wish to be all nose to smell the perfumes or else all eyes to gaze on the sights.

In that favoured spot there is no slavish attendance, no canvassing for places, no making of parties, no envy of any man's favour or fortune, no disappointments as to my pretensions to advancement, nothing but a calm enjoyment of the bounties of Providence in company with a good conscience. There I can enjoy myself in the greatest tranquillity and repose, without fear, envy, or desire of anything.

If I dwell under the protection of heaven a poor cottage for my retreat is of more worth to me than the most magnificent palace. There I can enjoy the riches of content in the midst of an honest poverty; in that humble dwelling undisturbed sleeps and undissembled joys do dwell, and I can spend my days therein without cares and my nights without groans, for my innocence is my security and my protection. In that peaceful place there are no beds of state, no garments of pearl or embroidery, no materials for luxury or excess; the heavens are my canopy, and the glories of them my spectacle; the motion of the orbs, the courses of the stars, and the wonderful order of Providence are offered me for my contemplation.

My grotto is safe, though far from spacious; no porter stands at the door, nor is there any business to bring Fortune thither, for she hath nothing to do, where she hath nothing to look for. In my retreat I am delivered from the luxuries of the world, and am kept free from the drudgery of business, two accidents of human life which make us troublesome to others and prevent our being at rest within ourselves; for the end of one appetite or design is the beginning of another. I value the counsel of Epicurus that we should 'live in a retired manner' beyond a diadem; and must say with Crates¹ 'that men know not how much a wayfarer's wallet, a measure of pulse, and security of mind are worth.' Retirement is the way to heaven which Nature hath chalked out, and it is both secure and pleasant; it needs no train of servants, no pomp or equipage, to make good our passage along it, no money or letters of credit for the expenses of the voyage; but the virtue of an honest mind will keep us secure while upon the way, as well as make us happy at our journey's end. Similis,² captain of the guard to the Emperor Hadrian, having passed a most toilsome life, retired from the world and lived privately in the country for seven years, and considered that he had really lived only during those seven years; indeed he caused these words to be engraven upon his monument,

'Hic jacet Similis, cujus aetas multorum annorum fuit, ipse septem dumtaxat annos vixit.'

You perhaps have more friends at court than I have, a larger train of attendants, a fairer estate, and

¹ Crates, a Stoic philosopher better known as a Greek grammarian.—H. S.

² Similis had been a centurion under Trajan. Hadrian, under whom he was *praefectus praetorio*, erected a statue in his honour.—H. S.

a more illustrious title; but why should I regret to be outdone by other men in some points, so long as unhappiness is overcome by me in all? When Zeno heard Theophrastus commended above any of the philosophers for having such a large number of scholars, 'it is true,' said Zeno, 'that his choir is larger than mine, but mine hath the sweeter voices.' So others may have more lordships, ampler possessions, and larger territories than I have, but mine is the sweetest, because the most retired, life.

Nothing comes amiss to me, but all things come to pass according to my very wish; there is in my lot no wrangling with fortune, no being out of humour because of the accidents of life; whatsoever befalls me is of God's pleasure, and it is my duty to bear it calmly. In such a state I feel that nothing is wanting, I am abundantly pleased with what I have, and what I have not I do not consider, so that everything around me is grand because it is sufficient. O the blessings of privacy and freedom, which are desired so much by great men, but are the privilege only of humble ones! It was the prayer of Augustus 'that he might live to retire into private life and so deliver himself from public-affairs.'

He that lives privately lives quietly; and he fears nobody of whom nobody is afraid. He that stands low and upon firm ground need not fear falling. What is all the glory and grandeur of the world, what are the great territories in it, compared with that happiness which I now possess and enjoy? The whole compass of the earth to me seems but a speck, and yet men are anxious to divide it into kingdoms and dominions. When King Philip of Macedon received a fall in a place of wrestling, and turned himself in rising, and saw the print of his body in the dust, 'Good God,' said he, 'what a small portion of earth hath nature assigned us, and

yet we covet the whole world!' Some are so covetous that the riches of Potosi will not content them; whereas in a retired life there is no use for money, except perhaps to look on it and pity those who love it.

In my retirement I am at no man's command, but am a servant to reason: yet I enjoy that privilege which Diogenes bragged of, when he said, 'Aristotle dines when it seems good to King Philip, but Diogenes when he himself pleases.' It is stark madness for a man to think that he can be safe and quiet when he is a great personage. Many liberties may be taken in a private condition that are dangerous in a public one. In my retreat I can walk alone where I please, without a sword, without fear, and without company. I can go and come, eat and drink, sleep or wake, without being taken notice of.

The higher we are raised, the more conspicuous are our errors and infirmities; in a high position, there is not a day, not an hour, that we can call our own. Indeed, how can we expect peace or repose in a station of life wherein all that ever went before us have encountered hazards and troubles if not death itself? When you are exalted in the orb of glory, remember that every man who gapes at you and flatters you is also jealous of you in his heart. It has been a common occurrence for men of the greatest eminence to perish by the hands and harms¹ of those whom they least feared. What with our open and secret enemies we are never secure, we are betrayed by our servants, by our relations, and even by our friends; but these are the infelicities and treacheries of courts, not of cottages. Servitude is the lot of those who dwell in palaces; in courts he that is master of many is yet the servant of more.

¹ 'Physical proofs of malice' is the sense here.—H. S.

Innocence hath no residence at court, where ambition always wars against eminent virtue.

Let any man observe the tumults and the crowds that attend palaces, and he will see what affronts he must brook in the effort to be admitted to one, and what much greater annoyances he must endure when he has effected his entrance. The way to happiness and tranquillity is smooth, but the road to greatness is craggy, and passes not only along the edges of precipices but also over ice and through thorny bushes. Once we have chosen that way, though we may desire to stay and rest sometimes, we shall find that ambition will not allow us to do so. What are crowns and sceptres but golden fetters and splendid miseries? If mankind did but truly understand this, there would be more kingdoms than kings to govern them. Let not your thoughts dwell upon the splendour of a crown, but upon the tempest of cares which rages around it: fix not your eyes upon the purple, but upon the mind of the king, more sad and dark than the purple itself. The diadem doth not more truly encompass his head, than cares and suspicions do his life: look not at the squadrons of his guards, but observe the armies of molestations which attend him. High rank is a great slavery, and thrones are but uneasy seats.

‘Sedes prima est vita ima.
Stet quicunque volet potens
Aulae, culmine lubrico :
Me dulcis saturet quies.
Obscuro positus loco,
Leni perfruar otio.’

Those grandees upon whom the admiring multitude gaze, as upon refulgent comets, thinking them to be prodigies of glory and honour, are of all men the most unhappy ; could you look into their breasts,

you would see swarms of cares and anxieties incessantly corroding their very hearts.

Consider how the brave men of the world, who for their merit have been advanced to high positions of glory, have for their virtues been ruined. Some have been proscribed because their deserts were above requital; and others have been banished, not because they had done any harm but for fear lest they might take advantage of their greatness to do some mischief to others. Rutilius and Camillus, to whom Rome did owe not a little of her greatness and renown, were rewarded with banishment: the Athenians cashiered¹ not only their Miltiades and Themistocles, who had often preserved their lives and fortunes, but also their Phocion and Aristides, which are not so much the names of men as they are symbols of virtue and goodness. The Venetians cast into prison that brave Pietro Loredano, a senator of Venice, because he had not power to becalm a tempest by land, I mean a great commotion and tumult raised by the seamen, which threatened much danger to the city; and the Venetians acted thus 'per ragione di Stato.'

A person who is virtuous and good does not therefore always triumph over difficulties; all things in this world suffer mutation, and he who is most eminent is a mark for the evil arts of base men. Always believe that it is best to live in the temperate zone, 'nec splendide, nec misere.' If heaven shall vouchsafe me such a blessing as that I may enjoy my grotto with content, I can look upon all the great kingdoms of the earth as so many little birds'-nests. And in such a domain I can feel as successful as

¹ *Sic* De Britaine's text. Miltiades died in prison, unable to pay his fine: Themistocles was ostracised from Athens in 471 B.C.: Phocion was put to death: Aristides was ostracised. —H. S.

Alexander did, when he fancied the whole world to be one great city, and his camp the castle of it.

If I were advanced to the zenith of rank I should at the best be but a porter, doomed to carry a vile carcase up and down the world. As it is, my mind (the nobler part of me) now and again ranges freely through the vast expanse of the heavens, and so can contemplate with awe the universe, the mysterious concatenation of causes, and the stupendous efforts of the Almighty. I can cheerfully bid adieu to the world when I have such matters to consider.

You will find by experience (which is the best looking-glass for wisdom) that a private life is not only more pleasant but more fortunate than any royal estate. I can easily believe that Diocletian after his retreat from the cares of empire, took more delight in exercising the trade of a gardener in Salona, than he had known in being Emperor of Rome; for when Maximian wrote to ask him to resume the Imperial dignity which he had with so much felicity retained for twenty years, he returned this answer 'that if Maximian would come to Salona, and observe the rare productions of nature, and see how the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands throve and prospered, he would never trouble his head with crowns nor his hands with sceptres.'

And sometimes I think that Dionysius took as great pleasure in commanding his scholars in Corinth, as he had experienced in reigning over Syracuse.¹ A clear consideration of life made Scipio, after he had raised Rome to be the metropolis of almost the whole world, decide upon a voluntary exile, and retire to a private house in the middle of a wood near Liternum, where he passed the remainder of his

¹ Some writers say that Dionysius the Younger supported himself in his exile at Corinth by keeping a school.—H. S.

glorious life in a manner no less creditable to him than his more public career had been.

The tallest trees are weakest in the tops, and envy always aims at the highest. In the case of grandees who have been bad men we find that their own demerit precipitates their fate ; while with regard to the good ones it is but too true that their virtues have often been their ruin. When great men have been fortunate abroad, they have often been undone at home by treachery or jealousies, and when they are unsuccessful in their projects the caprices of fortune are reckoned as their oversights, and their misfortunes are esteemed as crimes. However, though a virtuous and honest man (such as I wish you ever to be) may have the ill-luck to let his ship strike upon a rock, yet he will save his cargo of character, and so will have something left with which to begin life over again. There is no safety, no comfort, no contentment, in greatness ; the knowledge of this made a great man say '*requiem quaesivi et non inveni, nisi in angulo cum libello* (I have sought for rest and quiet, but could not find it, save in a little corner with a book).'

'*Vive tibi, et longe nomina magna fuge.*'

O the sweetness and pleasure of those blessed hours that I spend at a distance from the noise and business of the world ! So calm and gentle is the life that not so much as a cloud or breath of wind disturbs the serenity of my mind. The world of affairs is to me a prison, but solitude is a paradise. If there seems to you something pleasant in the idea of beholding from the shore the spectacle of mariners striving with storms, or of watching, from some safe height, armies engage in battle, then certainly you should think nothing more delightful than from the calm throne of wisdom to view the tumults and


contentions of fools. Not that it is pleasant to know that others are afflicted ; but there is some consolation in seeing that we keep ourselves from being involved in the same evils.¹

All the exterior lustre of the world, which charms the eyes of men, is but a painted scene, or a dial which we gaze upon when the sun of rank beams upon it. It is but like an act in a comedy which presently reaches its 'exeunt omnes.' Long life and a peaceful death are not granted or obtained by any royal charter unless virtue and integrity countersign the patent : flattery and envy, two old and cunning courtiers, lay secret trains wherewith to blow up the greatest structure of fortune. So give me a retired life, a peaceful conscience, honest thoughts, and virtuous actions, and I can pity Cæsar.



SECTION XXVII.

Of Complaisance.

T will shew great prudence in you to study carefully the art of reasonable complaisance, certainly an art of excellent use in the conduct of affairs. For there are so many obstacles in the ways that lead to a good

¹ I may be permitted to point out (in the interests of young readers) the extreme danger of this teaching. To the passionate lover of the intellectual life, this temptation to detachment of the mind from the human interests of the senate and the market-place has always seemed to come in divine guise. To fastidious and high-souled youth it appeals with fatal force, especially in a vulgar and sordid age. But we are put into the world to act, not (*pace* a great saint and many philosophers) to be 'spectators of existence,' and the condemnation of 'intellectual detachment' is that it induces paralysis of action as well as results in a withered soul.—H. S.

estate or to high position, that a morose or peremptory man rarely attains to either. Never so violently oppose yourself to the current of affairs in the times in which you live as to hazard your fame or fortune; but by fair complaisance ensure your safety. Plato compares a wise man to a clever gamester, who accommodates his play to the chances of the die. So should a wise man accommodate his acts to the events of life which often require new departures.

Mahomet once made the people believe that he was about to call a mountain to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. When the people were assembled, Mahomet over and over again called the mountain to come to him; however, when the mountain did not move he was not at all put out of countenance at his failure but passed it off with a jest. 'If the mountain will not come to Mahomet,' said he, 'Mahomet will go to the mountain.' You must imitate M. Porcius Cato, who was of such a temperament that he could suit himself to all occasions and was never at a loss.

Knowledge itself ought to be dressed according to the fashion of the day, and it is no small effort of ability to imitate the ignorant; we can but perceive how public taste changes with the times. A prudent man must accommodate himself to the present, even though the past may seem better unto him.

When anything is asked of you which you are not willing to grant, do not refuse point-blank, but offer your refusal slowly and so let it be taken down as it were by sips. Leave always a remnant of hope to dissipate partially the bitterness of the disappointment; let courtesy fill up the empty place of consent, and good words supply the shortcomings of good deeds; leave men some hope, when you cannot give them any satisfaction. A complaisant disposition, assisted by a practical knowledge of

men and things, gains and delights the hearts of people; it is a thing which a man must have, if he is to make the best of his own talent. A pleasant countenance hath certain charms which have a great influence on the minds of men.

Marshal de Retz¹ deserved the highest praise for his universal complaisance; access to his person was ever easy, his temperament was not morose, his demeanour was serene, and when necessity and private reasons obliged him not to grant a petition the refusal was couched in terms that sweetened the dose to the unsuccessful applicant. Truth has force, reason has authority, and justice has power, but they are without lustre if a graceful method and manner of doing be wanting. It is a pleasant way of doing things that largely helps to make the man of fashion.² A wise pilot always sets his sails according to the wind.

It will be prudent of you to ascribe your most eminent performances to the interposition of Providence, for that will take off the edge of envy; and none are less maligned secretly, or more applauded openly, than they who are thought to be rather happy than able, rather fortunate than cunning. When you come into company, or have to act with other men, lay aside all sharp and morose humours and be pleasant; for that will make you acceptable, and the better effect your ends. Xenocrates, who was naturally of a severe and rigid disposition, used to make himself very agreeable in society; when the disciples of Plato wondered much at this, Plato said, 'Do you wonder that roses and lilies grow amongst thorns?'

¹ Albert de Gondi, made Duc de Retz by Henri III. He was French ambassador to England. The date of his death is variously given, but '1602' seems to be correct.—H. S.

² De Britaine's phrase.—H. S.

I must confess, that owing to the malignity of my stars, I am very morose. I cannot suit myself to the humour of other men; I cannot, as Anaxagoras did, maintain snow to be black, nor, as Favorinus did, say that a quartan ague is a very good thing, but must appear without any disguise, and declare my judgment according to my own sentiments. I have no Sol in me, nor am I ductile; I cannot mould myself Platonically to the world's Idea: I had rather lose my head, than stoop to any low and unbecoming action: in my solitudes I can bless myself, when I contemplate the felicity that my ashes will meet in the urn.¹



SECTION XXVIII.

Of 'Faber Fortunae.'



VERY man is 'Faber Fortunae,' but there are many 'fortunae' spoiled in the making. If you aim at advancement in the world, be sure you have 'Jovem in arca'; your flight to preferment will be but slow without some golden feathers. You must study to ingratiate yourself into the favour of some great person,² upon whom you must depend rather than upon your own virtues; if not, you will be like a hop without a pole for everyone to tread upon; and wise men know that merit must take a great compass³ to rise, if not assisted by favour.

¹ This sentence is printed precisely as it stands in De Britaine's text, minus a few capital letters.—H. S.

² De Britaine is but stating the custom of the time.—H. S.

³ Viz., 'must waste much time in taking a roundabout course.' De Britaine is thinking of those kinds of birds which cannot rise in the air *from the ground* without first taking a run or flying low for some distance.—H. S.

To gain the favour of great persons you must be skilful in the art of fencing; for he that on the right or left hits their humour, wins the bout, and partakes of their bounty, but not he that merely shews much skill. If you wish to be a favourite, it is prudent to get Fame to sound the trumpet of your worth before you offer yourself; for by that means you will make yourself coveted, which will be a great advantage to you. But if you merely offer and intrude yourself, they¹ will think you are sufficiently rewarded by being accepted.

In attempting to raise the fabric of your fortune you will need no small wisdom to teach you how to polish and set off to advantage the materials of ordinary discourse. To discern temperaments, to suit the humours and character of men, rightly to observe the times and prudently to make opportunities, will raise you as it were by steps toward the pinnacle you aspire to. Some men who are bent on the pursuit of fortune are well versed in human character, but know not the nature of business; others are only wise by rule, and by the study of maxims, but ignorant as to the timing of business and the making of opportunities. I have known men who have raised themselves in the world by flattery (an art much in fashion) and so have done their business without running any risks, but I look upon flatterers as pests of society, and as disgraces of human nature.

He that will be master in the art of raising himself must set before him as an example that excellent Cato Major, who was said to be '*adeo versatilis ingenii, ut, quocunque loco viveret, fortunam sibi fabricare videretur.*' To be debonair, and to behave yourself with decorum, will contribute much to your advancement; for as the Roman orator tells you

¹ Viz., 'high personages.'—H. S.

'Proprium hoc esse prudentiae, conciliare sibi animos hominum et ad usus suos adjungere.' The veiling of your imperfections and defects is of no less importance than the exhibition of your ability. The mould of a man's fortune is in his own hands.

The man who wishes to be the architect of his own fortune must dispose his mind to judge of things as they conduce to his particular ends; for we observe that some men, in the conduct of affairs, prefer things of show and appearance before things of substance and effect. I do not advise you to pass for, or even to be, a crafty man; but the truth is there is no living nowadays without using every reasonable precaution; and it is well to be reputed prudent, though ill to be thought cunning. First employments are a trial of worth, and an opportunity of setting forth your credit and character to the world; and what you may succeed in doing afterwards can hardly make amends for any errors you may commit in your early undertakings. You must be careful upon all occasions to set forth and exhibit your talent to the best advantage; for concealed ability is like undiscovered treasure.

Make sail while the gale blows, and glide with the current while the stream is most strong; for if you follow Fortune when you first meet her she will usually treat you well. But he that cannot sometimes contrive to sail against the stream will hardly attain the port which he purposed to reach; for there is always some difficulty in the voyage to the shores of grandeur; therefore let him not enter into the wood that is afraid of rustling leaves. In embarking upon a public career you must never leave a string untouched that may make music for your interest and advantage. You must be of a sagacious spirit, for sagacity is an oracle in doubts and a golden thread in a labyrinth. A habit of quickness of

dispatch in business will prove to be a great help to you in attempting to rise; for superiors do not love to employ those who are subtile and slow as much as those who are speedy and diligent.

The failure of one man often creates the opportunity for another man's success, and no man prospers so suddenly as one who is helped by the errors of others. It is common to see one man build his fortune out of the ruins of another; when the tree has once fallen everyone hastens to gather sticks. A philosopher, who was asked what was going on in the heavens, answered, '*magnae ollae franguntur et ex frustis earum minores fiunt.*' We see in nature that the corruption of one thing produces the generation of another; and many men have generated their own fortunes by charging others with corruption. But I cannot approve of the methods of that Italian grandee who used to advance himself in the world by tempting men into dangerous practices, and then making a great show of detecting them, so that other men's offences became his first steps to his own greatness.

If you have merit, and aspire to rise, it may be judicious to transplant yourself, for in your own country there may be jealousy of your eminent qualities, and your own countrymen will be more likely to bear in mind the imperfections which you had in the beginning of your career than the merits by which you have since advanced yourself; he will scarcely have great veneration for an image, who has seen it as the stump of a tree.

'Homini praeclaro vivendum ubi Princeps vivit.'

If you aspire to advancement, it is not enough for you to stand at the gate of fortune in a graceful attitude and wait till she opens it; for '*ut hae tibi pateant fores confidentia et industria pulsandum est*

fortiter,' self-confidence and industry are two necessary and most useful appliances for the climber to grandeur. It is not enough for a man to have merit and virtue, he must know how to bring them into play; he must both be good and good for something. Sometimes a trivial action, if done well and at the right time, promotes a man more than the most solid ability or the greatest merit. The Grand Seignior¹ was one day reading a letter upon a terrace in his gardens, and the wind blew it out of his hand; the pages-in-waiting were emulous to please so great a prince, and ran round by the stairs to fetch it up; but one page who had practised leaping threw himself from the parapet and seized the paper as it fell. With one bound, he regained the terrace with it and presented it to the Grand Seignior, whilst the rest were running along the terrace to reach the staircase; this, to speak truly, was a raising of himself to grandeur, for the prince being wonderfully surprised at so prompt an action advanced the page by degrees to the highest dignity, so that at last he was made Grand Vizier.

A pleasant jest, or an apt repartee, sometimes advances a man more than all his industry or virtue. Doctor Montaigne,² who had been a favourite Chaplain to King James the first, was once in waiting upon King Charles the first when his Majesty was walking in St. James's Park; the King told the doctor, 'that he was more troubled as to how to dispose of the Archbishopric of York (which was then vacant) than he had been about any appointment in his life.

¹ Sultan of Turkey.—H. S.

² George Montaigne or Mountain (born 1569, died 1628). De Britaine (in the eleventh as in the fifth edition) calls him Mountague, apparently confusing him with Richard Montagu or Mountague, who died Bishop of Norwich in 1641. De Britaine's text also has 'Bishoprick of London' as the vacant see of the anecdote.—H. S.

'For there are so many that seek it with such high recommendations,' said the king, 'that I know not to whom to give it.' The doctor made reply to his Majesty, 'that if he had faith he might easily dispose of it.' 'Do you take me for an infidel?' said the King. 'No, please your Majesty,' said the doctor, 'but I assert that if your Majesty had faith enough, you might remove this mountain (clapping his hand upon his breast) into the sea.' The King was so well pleased with the pun, that he gave the Archbishopric to the doctor.

Some politic men have raised themselves to honour by freeness in opening themselves. Sigismund of Lunenburgh,¹ King of Hungary, being at the diet which was held for the purpose of choosing an emperor of Germany after the death of Rupert of the Palatinate, made a speech first (as was the custom) declaring to the electors the qualifications that an emperor should have. Sigismund set forth that an emperor ought to be a wise prince, have sufficient fortune wherewith to support the dignity, and be a valiant man, one able to protect the interests of the electors. After he had discoursed of these matters at some length, he told them 'that he thought these qualifications did not exist in any person more than they did in himself, and consequently that no man was more worthy of the empire than himself;' the rest of the electors were so well pleased with his boldness and frankness that they unanimously gave him their votes, and so he was advanced to the imperial dignity.

¹ I regret that I had overlooked this not too veracious anecdote until my note on page 45 had passed through the press. Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, was of the house of '*Luxemburgh*' (as De Britaine would probably spell Luxembourg), and the word in the text is doubtless one of the not infrequent printer's errors found in '*Humane Prudence*.' The error is the same in the fifth, eleventh, and twelfth editions. I have altered one or two details in the text of the anecdote.—H. S.

Honours and preferments are rarely the reward of virtue, but often the gift of whim and favour: is it not strange to observe a person raised to the dignity of a Constable of France¹ for having taught magpies to fly at swallows? To what grandeur do you think such a person as Domitian, who was so clever at catching flies, would have advanced himself if he had lived in that prince's² time? But let honours be the rewards of your merit, and not be your desired haven; attain to preferments not by winding stairs, but by the scale of your own virtues: if you miss promotion, you must content yourself with the thought that there is a reward for all things except virtue in this world. Though virtue be a patent for rank, and preferment ought to be an encouragement for worth, yet it may be observed in the course of affairs in this world that men of great abilities are often designedly suppressed; and exalted personages sometimes deal with persons of high accomplishment as the birds mentioned by Plutarch did with the jay, which they ill-treated for fear, in time, she might become an eagle.

And it hath been the unhappy fate of many virtuous persons, to be like an axe, which, when it has cut down the hard timber, is hanged up against the wall unregarded, or to be like a top, which has been often scourged and has spun³ well, but comes at last to be lodged up for a hobbler.⁴ The great

¹ Is this a reference to the Duc de Luynes? Compare page 104.—H. S.

² Viz. Louis XIII.—H. S.

³ De Britaine's text has 'run.'—H. S.

⁴ De Britaine's text (eleventh edition) has 'lodged up for a Hobbler'; but the fifth and twelfth editions both spell the noun as 'Hobler.' If this does not mean 'put away for the use of a younger child after the boys have grown tired of it,' I am at a loss to explain it. It is curious that Lyly's 'Mother Bombie' is quoted by Nares (edition of 1888) as containing these

Gonsalvo de Cordova, after he had conquered the Kingdom of Naples for Ferdinand of Spain, lived under an ostracism in his own country without preferment or regard. At a certain Roman election, Vatinius (a person of no moment) was advanced to the dignity of a praetor; but Cato, the glory of his age, was rejected. Rome's second founder¹ Camillus tasted exile; Scipio that great scourge of Carthage was accused of 'majestas,' and Coriolanus died in exile, chiefly because their worth and virtue lifted them above the ordinary pitch of subjects. 'Tis a great pity, methinks, thus to see the curtain drawn between a virtuous person and preferment. So far am I from agreeing with the philosopher Carneades, 'that injustice is to be preferred before justice,' or that it is better to be a knave than a virtuous and honest man; though I am often almost tempted to the opinion that it is better to be fortunate than to be wise or just, and ready to cry out with Brutus

'O Virtus, colui te ut rem, at tu nomen es inane.'

Therefore, if you design to rise and become great, I would not advise you to become too accomplished or to strive to be very learned or profound. For I have observed that knowledge often gives a check to confidence, which is the scale and rundle² by which

puzzling words: 'rather than I'll lead this life, I'll throw my fiddle into the leads for a hobler.' Halliwell (edition of 1850) gives 'hobler-hole' as alluded to as the name of the hinder-hole at a boy's game in a book of the date 1655. Hobler, Hobbler, or Hobeler was also a general name for a light horseman (one who rode on a hobby—that is, a pony), and a special name (1) for tenants bound to put themselves, and hobbies maintained by them, at the service of their country, (2) for the Beacon-Sentinels of the Isle of Wight.—H. S.

¹ A reference to the phrase 'the Second Romulus.'—H. S.

² 'Scale' may be used in its sense of 'ladder,' and 'rundle' in its sense of 'rung.' But I rather think that De Britaine

many climb up to the pinnacle; and I find by experience that common heads and narrow souls often work wonders by industry accompanied with ambition and covetousness, and usually do the business of the world. When Cardinal Peretti was made pope Sixtus V., an old acquaintance of his came to pay him a visit and to rejoice with him at his great advancement; but when they were alone together he told his Holiness, 'that he much wondered how he came to be promoted to the dignity of Head of the Church, when he had such moderate abilities.' Sixtus answered him, 'that if he understood how folly governed the world, he would not wonder that he was made Pope.' It was but too truly observed by an Italian writer, that there are not two more fortunate qualifications for success in this world than to have a touch of the fool, and not too much of the honest man, in one's character; virtue or merit is nowadays held in esteem no longer than there is use for it.

But be assured, there is nothing so dangerous and terrible in any state, as a powerful and authorised ignorance.¹ Men of weak abilities established in high places are, like little statues set on great bases, made to appear by their situation even less than they are; whereas wise men exalted, like good planets moving in their several spheres, carry their influences of virtue and wisdom round about the kingdom. In this world a little good-fortune is better than a great deal of virtue; and the least position of authority hath advantage over the greatest ability. But let nothing disquiet you; a virtuous person will at some time or another be

refers to the acrobatic use of a ring or loop and a rope. I have seen negroes go up cocoanut-palms with some such appliances.—H. S.

¹ Possibly a cut at the Commonwealth.—H. S.

thought good for something, and a wise man will once in an age come in fashion; fortune doth sometimes reward with interest those who have the patience to wait for her. I am much pleased with the shrewdness which led Themistocles to understand the Athenians so well, that he compared himself to a plane¹ tree, the leaves and boughs whereof men break off in fair weather, though they run under it quickly enough for shelter in a storm. Princes may bestow preferments, but they cannot make men truly honourable. The cook of Helio-gabalus was still but a base fellow, though his master made him as great as were his own vices.

And it is sometimes a greater honour to fail of the reward of merit than to receive it; the true glory and highest recompense of noble actions, is to have done them; and Virtue can find no guerdon (except in herself) which is worthy of her. Cato gloried more in knowing that people asked why he was not promoted, than he would have done in enjoying the greatest honours they had to bestow. If you have gained for yourself a reputation for virtue, be wise and make a fair retreat in time to preserve it unimpaired and to ward off envy; there is nothing better than a life withdrawn from daily conversation, especially that of the multitude.

‘Fugiat Sapiens commercia vulgi.’

The greatest perfection loses some of its worth by being in sight every day; therefore let a wise man betake himself to the sanctuary of an honourable retirement, for a fair retreat is as glorious as a gallant combat. Solon considered Tellus² the Athenian

¹ De Britaine's text has 'Palm Tree,' an absurdity which warned me to look through a translation of Plutarch's 'Themistocles.'—H. S.

² When Cræsus asked Solon if he had ever beheld a happier man than Cræsus, Solon instanced Tellus, a local hero.—H. S.

a most happy man because he lived privately upon his own lands.



SECTION XXIX.

*Of Negotiating.*¹

WITH regard to any undertakings, first examine your own strength, then the enterprise itself, and thirdly the person with whom you have to do. Take a just measure of your ability to perform it, and whether you can take it in hand without injury to your other occupations; before you commence action, consider first what the object of the enterprise is, and next, what means and instruments you have with which to effectuate it. It is indiscreet to attempt an eagle's flight with the wings of a wren; consider, 'Quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusent?' Have a care lest in attempting too high things you court mishap, and be like Thales, of whom Laertius narrates a tale, that while the philosopher was contemplating the stars, he fell into a ditch. When an enterprise fails, a door is opened for contempt.

It is not prudent to attempt over-hard or extraordinary enterprises, rather you should choose to exercise your ability upon those which are the most practicable and passant;² this will preserve you from

¹ Viz., 'transacting business.' De Britaine may have taken the title of this section from Bacon's Essays.—H. S.

² Sir Thomas Browne uses 'passant' for 'current': 'a popular error passant in our days.' (See Wilkin's 1835-6 edition of Browne's Works, volume 2, page 238, which is part of the eighth chapter of the first book of 'Pseudodoxia Epidemica.') But De Britaine's meaning appears to be, rather, 'ready-to-your-hand.'—H. S.

the touch of the foil, and increase your reputation. And when you attempt any great enterprise, take a companion with you, by that means you secure yourself against whatever evil may happen, or at least you are likely to have to bear only part of it; the skilful physician, who hath not succeeded in the cure of his patient, never fails to call for the assistance of another, who under the name of consultation helps to bear the pail; he that takes the whole conduct of an affair upon himself alone, attracts to himself all eyes. In your undertakings, if you desire to be successful, you must let reason sit as president of all your actions. Blunders are usually the results of some folly: and fools are unfortunate because they never think things out. Men believe that Luck is a greater goddess than she really is, and then by their own folly they increase her power.

Foresight is the right eye of prudence. He that forecasts what may happen will never be surprised; it is too late to begin to arm when the enemy is in our quarters. Prudence must be the midwife for all actions if they are to be well delivered; without it they are but at best still-born. Prudence should be a domestic oracle to you; it is the Ariadne's clue¹ which will guide you through the Mæanders² of the most perplexing and intricate affairs. Credulity is the guide of fools, but reason and prudence conduct wise men: be like Homer's wise man who had his eyes 'a fronte et tergo' (before and behind); remember Periander's 'always beware!' Thought is all in all: prudence will forestall all blunders and infelicities in your actions, and will ring the alarm

¹ Ariadne gave Theseus 'the clue of thread by means of which he found his way out of the Labyrinth.'—H. S.

² *Sic* De Britaine. The Mæander was a stream proverbial for its windings. I find 'Meanders' quoted as used as a plural by Shakspeare, Evelyn, and Arbuthnot.—H. S.

bell¹ upon the approach of any to make you fly to the remedy.

If you have any enterprise in hand, grasp it with a boon¹ courage, for from diffidence immediately springs fear, and fear banishes self-reliance. Philip of Spain having designed to make a certain man an ambassador, the man came to converse with the king, and proceeded to make some requests about his embassy with a modest and indifferent air; whereupon Philip remarked, 'how can I expect that this man will promote and effect my business, when he is so fearful and faint in his solicitations about his own?' You should perceive that confidence and boldness are excellent engines wherewith to effect your intentions; for by an effluxion of spirits² from your fancy, you do, as it were, pull and bind him with whom you have to do to condescend to your desires.

Be not over-precipitate in your designs; great designs require great consideration, and they must be allowed to have time to mature, otherwise they will prove abortive. It is said that the Emperor Vespasian stamped some of his coinage with a dolphin and an anchor and the motto 'Soon enough if well enough.' (The dolphin can outstrip the ship, so that she arrives soon enough; an anchor holds a ship safely, so that the ship is well enough.)

In an affair of difficulty you must not think to sow and reap at once, but must prepare the business, and then ripen it by degrees. When you intend to do anything important, never blow a trumpet so that the attention of others is called to your project. He who reveals his plans is obnoxious to³ censure, and if he does not succeed in them, he becomes ridicu-

¹ *Sic* De Britaine.—H. S.

² Viz., 'influences.'—H. S.

³ This use of the phrase is now almost confined to medical writers.—H. S.

lous ; secrecy in business is a great means of obtaining the object of it. Silence about business holds the minds of men in suspense, and raises expectation, which leads to everything you say and do being set down as part of a mystery which hides great ability.

‘Cum facturus es aliquid, cogita quo in statu eris cum egeris, seu expediat seu non.’

Never attempt anything which is not hopeful and just, for it will be equally troublesome to you either not to succeed or to be ashamed of the success. And in all your affairs strive to choose instruments that are good of their kind and are adapted to the business in hand ; for be assured that if they prove not to be so, the whole machine¹ of your enterprise, however well contrived, will fall to pieces. There be persons that can pack the cards,² and yet cannot play well ; some men are good in action but are bad counsellors ; others are good counsellors but are bad actors ; you must make choice of such persons as are good in their own affairs as instruments to aid your own good counsel of yourself. A fool knows more in his own house than a wise man in another’s.

I like not the choice of such instruments as are so over-cunning that they can sound the depth and bottom of whatever design they are put to assist, for they are seldom honest and true to their trust ; or of those who are willing to contrive anything whereby to prejudice the person who employed them, once they are out of his service. There is a Roman tale of a man who for a long time held high office, not for

¹ *Sic De Britaine.*—H. S.

² ‘Arrange the cards in such a way as to secure an undue advantage.’ Bacon’s Essay ‘Of Cunning’ (Whately’s 1857 edition of Bacon’s Essays, page 204) says : ‘There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well.’—H. S.

any excellent ability that was in him 'sed quia par negotiis neque supra erat' (but because his sufficiency did no more than equal the charge which was imposed upon him).

In the management of affairs it is not safe always to use the same tools or the same conduct, for that being in time observed by those with whom you have to do, you will then assuredly be disappointed in some enterprise; it is easy to shoot a bird that flies outright, but not one that is irregular in its movements. A cunning gamester seldom plays the card which his adversary expects, much less the one which he desires. Yet it is not good to employ intrigue often, or to deal too much in artifices, for once you are suspected of it you will soon be discovered; jealousy is always upon the watch, and you need much skill to guard against it. A wise man walks not always along the same road, nor keeps always the same pace; so a man who is judicious in business acts according to the occurrences of affairs, and varies his methods according to the alterations of time and place.

Your instruments being well chosen, the next step is to observe that excellent apothegm of Pitacrus,¹ 'Recognise the opportunity,' for be assured that the right timing of business is a most important point as to its transaction; affairs depend on many circumstances, and what succeeds at one time would fail at another. Time is the measure of business, as money is of wars; if the tides and currents of opportunity be not used when they run high the ship rarely reaches port. Opportunities are quick-flying game, and are rarely hit by a second discharge. There is nothing which contributes more to the making of undertakings prosperous than the seizure of times and opportunities for business; if you let

¹ One of the 'Seven Wise Men of Greece.'—H. S.

them slip, all your plans must be rendered unsuccessful ; but if they be promptly grasped and used with diligence you will seldom miss your objects.

The State of Venice once sent two ambassadors to a Pope about some grand business that concerned him and the republic ; but they were informed, on inquiry, that the Pope was very ill and kept his bed. Thereupon the ambassadors pressed for an audience, and after great importunity it was granted to them. One of the ambassadors wisely made a very long harangue to the Pope about the affair, and at great length assured his Holiness that he had been misinformed as to the action of the State of Venice ; the sick Pope suffered greatly, by reason of the tediousness of the oration. The other ambassador, seeing this, followed the lead of the first, and told his Holiness, ‘ that he was afraid that his Holiness did not fully grasp the matter, because he was so ill, that if he pleased, his colleague would repeat his speech over again.’ The Pope answered ‘ that if the ambassadors would say what they wanted, he would grant their request, rather than hear a long oration over again.’ And thus, by the shrewdness of her ambassadors in seizing an opportunity, Venice gained that from the Pope which at another time she could never have obtained of him.

A wise man must not only turn with opportunity but also run with it. If you hope to bring your ship into a safe harbour, you must weigh anchor and set sail when the tide serves and the wind blows from the right quarter. When you make an important proposition of business to any person, you must first know his character, next feel his pulse, and then attack him in alliance with his own desires, and you will rarely fail to succeed. You must learn to be a good Book-man,¹ one who understands men as well

¹ *Sic* De Britaine.—H. S.

as he does books ; get Apollo's spectacles,¹ Tiresias's bright lamp of understanding, or the true candle of Epictetus, and you will discern most men at the first glance, and will learn to observe all their methods and the twistings of the human mind. There is a great difference between knowing things and knowing persons ; it is a quaint piece of philosophy to discern the minds and humours of men ; and the knowledge of persons teaches men who take pleasure in the game of business to play their cards better, and to handle affairs with more dexterity.

The truest exposition of human nature is by the characters and aims of men ; the weakest sort of men are best interpreted by their characters, the wisest by their objects. By trifles the qualities of men are as well shewn as by great actions ; because in matters of importance they commonly adopt such behaviour as suits their interest and endeavour to restrain themselves, but in lesser things they follow the current of their own natures.² 'Sermo est index animi' ; speech is the interpreter of the mind ; words, though they are often full of flattery or dissimulation, are not to be disregarded as signs of character, especially when they are spoken with passion or haste ; and a few words casually dropped are often more worthy of our attention than those of set solemn speeches which rather shew men's arts than their natures.

In broaching matters of business behave yourself with prudence (which is the key to unlock secrets,

¹ Apollo received the gift of divination from Pan.—H. S.

² Schopenhauer, chief among practical philosophers, has insisted upon this idea with terrible force. But it does not apply to all kinds of character. Very generous and unselfish men are sometimes mean in trifles, and saintly people are often unscrupulous and irritable in domestic details, whereas murderers have borne on the whole an excellent character for kindness to animals.—H. S.

and unriddle mysteries) otherwise you will have no good return for the information which you afford. He that has a pleasant manner in discoursing of business, but is not prudent in what he says, is like a house that has beautiful gates and staircases, but in which there is not one good room. When an old acquaintance of Tiberius began to speak to him with the phrase 'you remember Tiberius,' 'no,' said Cæsar (cutting him short), 'I do not remember what I was.' When you address any person, fix your eyes upon his face and figure, and try to look into the recesses of his mind, and you may get direction in your business; for as the tongue speaks to the ear so the gesture does to the eye. Atticus, before the first interview occurred between Cæsar and Cicero, gave Cicero serious advice with regard to the composing of his countenance and ordering of his gestures.

You must learn to shape yourself, and cultivate a good judgment in matters of business. '*Illud est sapere si ubicunque opus sit, animum possis flectere.*' The power to recognise temperaments, to discern the humour and to suit the character of him with whom you have to do, is a possession absolutely necessary, but requires a capacity of wisdom wherewith to acquire it. Keep formality above board but prudence and wisdom under decks; for nothing will give a greater remora¹ to your plans, than to be esteemed sagacious by those with whom you are doing business; your reputation for wisdom will serve but as a warning to them never to come (as it were) unarmed when they have any business with you, and it will also make them jealous of you. It is no small piece of ability sometimes to act the part of the ignorant; and there are occasions when the best knowledge is to pretend not to know.

¹ Viz., 'check': see my note on page 161.—H. S.

Some persons by a little compliance can be persuaded to do almost anything; there is nothing to be got from them by reason, for having none themselves they will hear none from others. It is a delicate part of practical knowledge to observe well and guess at the meaning of the little hints that are given you by the way and to know how to improve them; this is the finest probe of the recesses of the heart: but as they are sometimes cunningly given out so they must always be received cautiously. Let your applications about business be made with a good grace (that is a politic magic wherewith to charm the hearts and affections of them with whom you have to do) but be not over-ceremonious; it is good to carry yourself with sufficient decorum, so as to gain respect, but I would not have you pass for a master of ceremonies.

If you can handle men aright as to their inclinations and humours, and know at what times, in what manner, and by what means they may be stirred up, you may rest assured that even before you thoroughly know their minds you will be master of what your heart desires.



SECTION XXX.

Of the Politic Man.¹

HE world every day puts on new dresses, and is so disguised in various shapes of policy that he must be a wise man that is able to unriddle the transactions of it. The variation of the latitude of the maxims received

¹ De Britaine's heading is 'Of the Politick.' He appears to have started writing this section with some intention of teaching

is so great, that a scheme of new politics had need be erected to understand the sphere of action.¹

There goes more to the making up of one wise man nowadays, than in ancient times it took to complete seven : formerly there were but seven wise men in all Greece, at present you will hardly find so many fools in a nation. A wise man must therefore learn to cast the order of government into new moulds, as fortune and affairs require ; if a man be furnished with great virtues, yet if he lacks sagacity he will never make any figure in the world. A politic, like Samson, needs to carry his strength in his head, not in his arms. Self-confidence, ambition, and covetousness are the steps by which he ascends to grandeur.

At all marts of business he has his agents, though they do not seem openly to trade ; he finds others to do his business, and makes it worth their while to work diligently. He has even learned the art of great princes, how to get humble people to serve his interests without their even knowing it. In all his prince's affairs he makes himself necessary and useful. He is a conscientious person, for he always mixes the 'promptings of conscience' with 'reasons of state.' He is very free in conferring small favours and courtesies ; he acts thus to beget confidence, that he may deceive in great matters. He makes use of others, as the fox did of the cat's foot to pull the apple out of the fire for his own eating. Principle is the rudder by which he wishes to appear to

a young man of birth and breeding how to become a successful politician by being a politic man, and then to have been carried away by his fastidious and aristocratic temperament into penning a bitter attack upon the corrupt politicians of the day.—H. S.

¹ De Britaine employs the language of astrology here, as in other parts of this book. See page 28.—H. S.

steer his actions, but in fact he turns it, as the wind blows, to suit his own advantage. When he has got any persons into his net he does not immediately trouble to haul it up; for when they are well within the net, they are then at his mercy.

He thinks it not prudent to stand so near a prince as possibly to be involved in his ruin; nor so far off, but that when his ruin comes he can raise himself upon some part of it. Therefore like the crab, he keeps the door of the oyster¹; he makes what profit he can when opportunity serves, and he is not fastidious in taking advantage. He firmly believes that self-interest is that which leads mankind by a string; he imitates the hawk which usually flies high yet will sometimes descend to a heap of dirt to catch its prey; he hoists his sail on that sea where the winds blow fairest for his advantage. He has the hands of Briareus wherewith to oppose the designs of others, as well as the eyes of Argus wherewith to penetrate their desires. He is an Achitophel² for plotting, as quick-sighted as a lynx, as active as fire, as insinuating as an awl; and like the old woman Ptolemais, never happy but when engaged in some intrigue. He is continually trying new plans, and yet is always thinking that something which he has not prepared for may happen by chance; he remembers how the ape managed to cure himself of a pleurisy by the accident of wrapping himself in his master's cloak.

If at any time he disburses money to anybody, he uses it merely as anglers do fish, to bait the hooks

¹ *Sic* De Britaine.—H. S.

² It may be interesting to note that the first part of Dryden's 'Absalom and Achitophel' appeared in 1681. A pamphlet called 'Absalom's Conspiracy; or, The Tragedy of Treason,' was printed in the year 1680, and is reprinted in 'The Harleian Miscellany' (see the edition of Oldys and Park (1808-13), vol. vii., page 530).—H. S.

and serve to catch more. His conscience, like Fortunatus's purse, is full of gold and self-ends¹; in order that his reputation may swell and look big in the rolls of fame he is bold and daring, and always in some plot. He thinks that successful wickedness is virtue, and that a sin crowned with success deserves a triumph. As for 'just' and 'unjust,' he looks upon such words as the needlework of idle brains. His favourite motto is, 'he that is in the highway that leads to honours, is never out of an honourable course'; and he really believes that any success must be creditable.

He condemns the anatomists for maintaining that there is a ligament that ties the tongue and the heart together; and has no kindness for the people of Quambaia and other parts of Peru, because they have their heads in their breasts, and so their tongues are too near their hearts.² The tongue and the heart are organs which he endeavours ever to keep asunder. He does not respect the jackal, because it provides food for the lion; but has a great regard for the prudent cat, because she mouses only for herself. Interest is the chart by which he steers, and himself the harbour to which all his designs carry cargo. He is, like Theramenes, a shoe fitted for every man's foot³; like the spaniel, when he cannot make use of his teeth he wags his tail.

He uses no more virtue than serves his turn; and

¹ Viz., 'plans for the benefit of himself alone.' I find this plural quoted as used by Jeremy Taylor and Congreve.—H. S.

² Hakluyt's 'Voyages' and Raleigh's 'Description of Guiana' are quoted as giving accounts of such people.—H. S.

³ Theramenes was an Athenian naval commander, politician, etc. He was one of those people who give way to a natural tendency to treachery, without having even the excuse of cowardice. He acquired the nickname of *Kόθορπος*—a shoe which would fit either foot.—H. S.

he only desires the reputation of honesty to procure him the confidence of other men, which will enable him to deceive them, and so will help him to succeed in his designs the better. He never troubles his head about those trifling points, conscience and honour; for in great undertakings he thinks there is nothing more unfortunate or unprosperous than a coy and squeamish conscience. When he has any great design in projection, in order the better to effect it, he puts on a religious dress, and a countenance with a godly wry look like a Persian alphabet: this, he says, is the best magnetism to make a strong verticity¹ to the point of any design. He can swallow down oaths with as much celerity as Lazarillo de Tormes² could a sausage. He puts on the white robe of innocency the better to conceal the blackness of his attempts; his words he puts into a spiritual quirpo³; and Proteus-like he assumes that shape which is most in fashion and most likely to be profitable to his own ends. He makes use of religion as a stirrup by which to get into the saddle, and so comes to sit upon the back of dignity. Hypocrisy is the ground and basis of his polity; and to find out opportunities of deception, he thinks, is the knack of men of ability. He is dexterous at telling the news, and has a mint always about him wherein to coin such news as it may suit his objects

¹ Viz., 'rotation.'—H. S.

² 'La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes,' written by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, was translated into English and published in 1586. Another English edition appeared a few years before the first edition of 'Humane Prudence.'—H. S.

³ Unless this is a misprint for 'quip' or 'quirk,' I am at a loss to explain it. The curious ropes with knots, used by the ancient Peruvians to record events and accounts with, are called 'quipos' in Spanish, but this can hardly be the reference. The translator of 'Humane Prudence' into French has omitted portions of this section, and so does not help us in this matter.—H. S.

to have repeated. He always carries a dose of 'Pillulae Aureae' about him, for they work safely and remove all obstructions; he thinks there is nothing so hard, but that the wonderful metal (gold) will penetrate it. He considers that it is the general which can take the strongest city, though he rides on the back of an ass; and he assures us that

'Destruction surer comes, and rattles louder,
Out of a mine of gold, than out of powder.'

I have given you a sketch of the politic man, that you may know his principles and abhor the practice of them.

'Politici est virtus maxima, nosse dolos.'

You will perceive that men of little honour or integrity are the fittest timber to make great politicians¹ of.

The trees were so well satisfied with what they saw of the monarchical state, (that of the birds under the eagle, and that of the beasts under the lion) that they propounded a resolution as to erecting a kingly government among themselves. The question was put, and all were unanimously in favour of the project; there were not, however, above five or six competitors for the post.

The oak relied upon 'its long life, the comfort of its shade and protection, and the obligation to it which the whole race of mankind lay under for feeding their first parents in Paradise.' The laurel valued itself upon 'being thunder-proof, and upon having had the honour of crowning the Roman emperors, and those that entered the Capitol in triumph.' The Pomegranate claimed a natural right to a crown for 'having brought the image of a crown into the world along with it.' The Olive's pretension

¹ *Sic* De Britaine.—H. S.

was that it 'was a symbol of peace, and sacred to the goddess Minerva.' The Vine stood upon 'the merit of making the life of man long and happy.'

They were thus very much divided among themselves as to the choice of a ruler, until at last they happened to cast their eyes and their thoughts upon the orange, observed its perpetual verdure, inhaled the incomparable fragrance both of its fruit and flowers, and remembered that that fruit and those flowers were never out of season. Thereupon they chose the orange tree for their king 'nemine contradicente' and without his needing to say a word in his own behalf.



SECTION XXXI.

Of the Favourite.

IF it be your¹ desire to rise so high as to become a favourite to a great personage, you may have some prospect of doing so in Utopia ; for I have heard that men are advanced there for their merit and worth.

You must understand that there are many doors which open toward preferment, but the prince keeps the keys of them all. Therefore be careful to learn the alphabet of his temper, and observe his inclinations closely, as the astronomers do the planet dominant and the mariners the north star. For great persons reckon them the wisest men that can best suit themselves to their humour ; and usually they pledge their affections no farther than they foresee a return of service. Therefore as princes

¹ De Britaine is specially thinking of the Edward Hungerford class of young man.—H. S.

need arts wherewith to govern kingdoms, so favourites must have arts by which they can govern their princes.

Desire not to monopolize your prince's ear; for if you do so, his misadventures will be imputed to your advice while whatsoever is well done will be ascribed to his wisdom. You will be injudicious if you offer him extraordinary services; that merit to which reward can easily reach ever comes off best in these days. To study the humours of a prince may advance you in the present; but to attempt to understand and promote the interest of his kingdom is a far more safe enterprise. He that serves a prince's private interest may be great for a time; but he is likely to remain great who is careful of the national welfare. Be ready to give a public account, if required, of all your transactions; for he who fears a test is like gold which has too much alloy.

Let your deportment be humble, and be of easy access; a favourite is like coin, in that virtue may give him the stamp but it is humility must give the weight. A high fortune, like great buildings, must have low foundations. Pride ill becomes any person; even if it injures no one save its owner, yet it gives offence to others; and few persons like to see even a complaisant person set upon high if they once knew him as their equal. You must be 'minimus in summo' like the orient stars, which appear the less the higher they are; honour is 'bonum sine clavi et serâ.' To be proud of knowledge is to be blinded with light; to be proud of goodness is to poison yourself with an antidote; to be proud of authority is to make your rise your downfall. Where pride and presumption go before, shame and loss follow after.

A countryman in Spain once came and appealed to an enshrined image, the first making whereof he

could well remember, but did not obtain from it the favour which he prayed for; 'you need not (quoth he) be so proud, for we have known you from a plum-tree.' Have a care that you do not find the moral of this story in your own experience. To be humble to superiors is your duty; to be courteous to equals is but good-breeding; to be civil to inferiors shews good sense; to be just to all will ensure your safety. Fortune may begin a man's greatness but it is virtue that must continue it. Never do that in prosperity whereof you may repent in adversity.

Ever think goodness to be the best part of greatness; when rank and virtue are in conjunction, it is a noble aspect, and Jupiter is lord of that ascent.¹ But greatness without goodness is like the Colossus of Rhodes, not so much to be admired for its workmanship as for its huge bulk; therefore make goodness what a gold-setting is to a diamond, a support to greatness. Greatness may build the tomb but only goodness can write a worthy epitaph upon it. Give things the right colour, not varnishing them over with a false gloss. Flatterers are dangerous flies in a state, but they thrive and prosper better than the most worthy and brave men do. Yet, if your heart is set upon becoming a favourite at court, I know that you will need to have so much of the Persian religion in you as to worship the rising sun.

You must also learn to translate into English '*neminem tristem dimittere*'; and when you cannot give men satisfaction as to what they desire you must console them with fair hopes. Denials must be softened by civil usage; for though you cannot cure men's sores your prudence may shew you how to abate their sense of them. If you have any venturous project in view it is often prudent, before

¹ De Britaine again makes use of the language of astrology.
—H. S.

you come to action, to let out certain things on purpose to see how they will take; by that means you will discover the inclinations of the people; if the couriers do not meet with a good reception, keep your army in camp. If you desire that the designs to which you wish to give birth may not prove abortive, do not assign a certain day for their appearance in action, but leave them to the natural forcing of fit times and opportunities; be like those curious artists in China who temper the mould to-day of which a vessel may be made a hundred years hence.

If you have enemies (and you may expect to have many, if you become great by your master's favour) the best way to secure your position is privately to give out libels and rumours tending to your own disgrace; your enemies will catch fire at the first touch of them, as powder does at a spark, and then you will see how you stand. To deal plainly with you, the greatness of one man is nothing but the ruin of others; and when you have discovered their weakness it will be your strength.

But if any pasquils¹ or libels shall be vented against you by others (and the most excellent persons are often infested with them) it is more prudent to let them bury themselves in their own ashes than to give them new flames by confuting them; for libels neglected will quickly find a grave. But let me tell you, as rumours and libels are not always to be thought important, so they are not always to be ignored; it being no less dangerous to take no precautions against their consequences than it is vain to fear them. And we have learned by experience that libels and pasquils (the only weapons of some unhappy persons) have been forerunners of the ruin and destruction of some of the most illustrious men.

¹ See note on page 33.—H. S.

You must be careful to keep an Ephemerides,¹ so as to know how the great orbs of the court move. If any new star should arise out of the east, and men should begin to worship it, you must learn how to eclipse or suppress it. Indeed it will be prudent of you to attempt to cut away all steps by which others may ascend to high office or grandeur; for if you leave any stairs standing, others will attempt to climb up. And I must warn you, that it is more safe at court to have many enemies of equal power with yourself, than one false and ambitious friend who hath absolute command of the royal favour. But in case any formidable rival shall arise, you must remove him out of the way with sagacity, under pretence of procuring him some honourable employment or otherwise; when that is done——well, you know how Augustus dealt with Mark Antony, when he got him from Rome into Egypt! It hath been the practice of some, like the fox, to thrust out the badgers that digged in the earth from their comfortable places; but the wisdom of this must be left to your discretion.²

In all business ever pretend to have the public good in view; that will make you popular, and so you may with the more safety and security push on with schemes that concern your private interests; and let me advise you to be so faithful a servant to your master, that whatsoever you do yourself you suffer not others to deceive him. Make the royal interest one with your own; incorporate your acts with the authority of the sovereign; then you cannot be offended without his being aggrieved. Strive

¹ An almanac having 'astronomical tables calculated to show the diurnal motions of the planets, with their places and aspects, etc., throughout the year.'—H. S.

² This paragraph is of course ironical, and reminds one of Swift's method of branding types of character which he detested.—H. S.

to partake as much as possible of his bounty; the more preferment you obtain from him the greater will be your security, for he will look upon you as his creature, raised solely by him, and so he will endeavour to preserve you from molestations. If at any time you propose anything to him which you are afraid will hardly be accepted or granted, offer it bit by bit so that one piece may be digested before the other be presented.

In all your negotiations, you must have an invisible way of handling matters as angels have of communication; the ring of Gyges will be of great use to you, for he observes best who is himself least observed. And if you wish to preserve your own safety speak truth; for you will hardly ever be believed, and so your enemies will usually nose along a false scent; but should your plans be at any time forced into the light, you will be seen to have uttered no falsehood about them.¹

In council, it will as a rule be prudent of you to oppose all suggestions of rash methods in doing business of importance; if the thing designed succeed well, your caution will not be remembered against you, if it turn out ill (as it may, since great undertakings are subject to many risks) you may benefit yourself by being able to say that you uttered a warning against it. But in great emergencies, it will be wise of you not to content yourself with carefully discussing what courses are lawful, but to suggest quick action which is fairly safe.

Admit none to be of your cabal² but such as have

¹ I have followed the *fifth* edition of 'Humane Prudence' as closely as possible in this sentence. The eleventh and twelfth editions have misunderstood De Britaine's meaning.—H. S.

² 'Cabal' is used here for 'party' or 'faction.' It will be remembered that this word, applied in the reign of Charles II. 'to the small committee or junto of the Privy Council' which was the 'precursor of the modern *cabinet*' (N. E. D.), has been

their fortunes solely depending upon you. In dangerous attempts put others in front to act first ; but ever keep yourself behind the curtain. In hazardous schemes you must be always provided with some cunning stratagems wherewith to baffle your enemies or at least to secure yourself and your party. If you cannot attain your ends by wisdom, use '*argentea tela*,' they never fail, for '*virtutem et sapientiam vincunt testudines*': and as men have a touchstone wherewith to try gold, so gold is the touchstone wherewith to try men.

I have hinted¹ these points unto you, without wishing to advise you to do anything that is against the law of honour or the dignity of your religion. Prudence is an armoury wherein are defensive as well as offensive weapons ; the former you may make use of upon all occasions, but the latter should only be handled in cases of necessity. We know that the Apocrypha is allowed to be digested into one volume with the sacred word and to be read together with it, but where it thwarts that which is canonical it is to be laid aside.

Shrewdness and religion, as they do well together, so they do ill asunder ; the one being too cunning to be good, the other too pure to be false ; therefore a little of the wisdom of the serpent, mixed with some few scruples of the innocence of the dove, will be an excellent ingredient in all your actions.

specially applied since 1673 by many writers to the five Ministers of Charles II. who signed the Treaty of Alliance with France (for war against Holland) in 1670-71. The reader has seen in the Preface to this book that this treaty was of particular interest to De Britaine. The reader will notice the irony of this paragraph.—H. S.

¹ Viz., 'briefly mentioned,' a use of the verb which was quite correct in De Britaine's day, although it seems to have escaped the notice of several good editors of English dictionaries in this century.—H. S.

SECTION XXXII.

The Sun of Honour in the West.

UT I have blotted too much paper ; I must turn from the writing-desk and lay down my pen. And yet, before I leave you, I must give you some last counsels which I hope may stay with you to the last.

If you are mounted on the pyramid of Honours you must remember that it hath but one point, and that the least slip may hazard your fall from that. If you should chance to lose yourself in the empire of greatness, return to your own solitudes¹ and privacy, and there you may find yourself again. Let no circumstances surprise you and then you cannot be afflicted in any ; a noble spirit must not waver with its fortunes. There is no condition so low but that there may be hope for it ; nor any so high that it is out of the reach of fears. In your worst estate retain some hope, in your best admit some fear, but in all be circumspect ; man is a watch, which must be looked to, and wound up every day.

It should be as natural to highly-gifted persons to oppose a brave front to misfortunes as it is to the weakest children to bewail them. Though you lose all, yet you may still possess your soul in patience ; that is your last reserve. It is a stronghold whereunto he who is beaten out of the field may always retire, and if he does not choose to surrender it he cannot be forced out of it. It is the mark of a brave soul always to hope ; there is more glory to be got in struggling against adversities than in avoiding action for fear of them. For virtue that is unhappy, for distressed souls that are innocent, there are found to be wells of comfort in the rocks.

¹ Viz., 'lonely retreats' such as the one described at page 170.
—H. S.

Remember the words of that miracle of valour, the Dauphin of France who was afterwards Charles the Seventh, when they told him of that sentence which was extorted from the Parliament of Paris by the two kings, his father the King of France and his enemy the King of England,¹ whereby he was declared incapable of succeeding to the Crown of Lilies.² He answered undauntedly that 'he appealed'; his friends wondered at this speech and asked him 'whither'; he replied, 'to the greatness of my heart and the point of my sword; and his words were followed with proportionate effects. Brave soul, whom the loss of a crown could not dispirit!

'Impavidum feriant ruinae.'

Reverses of fortune are grievous obstacles to meet with on the road to preferment, but great infelicities often usher us into the antechamber of success if by patience and industry we strive to triumph over our calamities. Misfortunes are distressing at first, but when there is no remedy for them save patience necessity gives us courage to bear them and in time they become less irksome. I cannot but admire the temperament of Eumenes,³ whose courage was never lessened by adversity nor his circumspection by prosperity. One month in the school of affliction will teach you more wisdom than the grave precepts of Aristotle will in seven years; for you can never judge rightly of human affairs until you have yourself felt the blows and deceits of fortune.

I am not (I bless my stars) disturbed at anything,

¹ Henry V.—H. S.

² The reference is to the Treaty of Troyes.—H. S.

³ Eumenes, the secretary of Alexander the Great, who became an able general and statesman. He was a rare combination of the man of caution and the man of energy.—H. S.

neither does passion disquiet me; I hate nothing unless perhaps it be hatred itself. I am no more troubled at the want of anything I have not than I am because I am not the Sophy of Persia or the Grand Seignior.¹ He is a happy man that can have what he desires, and that I profess myself to be because I desire nothing but that which I can have. I am much delighted with the pleasant humour of Thrasyllus,² and can in my own imagination make myself as rich as the Indies.

I am a little world and I enjoy all things within my own sphere: honour and riches, which others aspire unto, I possess and enjoy in myself. Health is the temperate zone of my life, and my mind is the third region in me; there I have an intellectual globe, wherein all things subsist, and move according to my own ideas. The stars, though they are glorious and splendid bodies, I yet look upon as but spangles, which at best do only embroider the canopy of the place wherein I am to dwell. Often I raise my spirits to so generous a pitch that I think Heaven itself not too high for me: I can grasp in one thought all that globe for which ambitious men fight.

I account nothing more noble than my soul, except the Almighty God, whose offspring it is; I never stain it with that earth or metal which others are ambitious to get; for if my mind longs for more goods than I possess, that shews me how unsatisfactory all extrinsic objects are.

If some man robs you of part of your goods, consider that God, by that man, has taken back what he hath only lent you. A thing that you might have foreseen has come to pass; and why are you amazed?

¹ Viz., 'the Shah of Persia or the Sultan of Turkey.'—H. S.

² De Britaine's text has 'Thrasalus.' Is this a reference to Thrasyllus, the astrologer of Tiberius?—H. S.

What has just happened to you, you have often seen and known happen to others; all things in the universe by their very nature are subject to alteration and change. Then how ridiculous it is, when anything unpleasant happens, to be disturbed or to wonder as if some strange event had come to pass! I must admit that I am a part of the universe, and therefore how can I allow myself to be displeased with anything that falls to my own lot? Nothing which is good for the whole can be in reality hurtful to that which is a part of it.

However '*innocens sit animus in iratâ fortunâ*'; and virtuous persons, like the sun, appear most glorious at their setting, for the patient enduring of necessary evils is next in honour to a voluntary martyrdom. Adversity bravely overcome wins a man high esteem, and when it is cheerfully undergone has served to shew that its victim has a fine character; we can see that sufferings are but tests of gallant spirits. When that brave Aristides was sentenced to banishment he said no more than this, 'I wish my fellow-countrymen no worse thing, than that they may never have any more need of Aristides.'

A brave man must not yield to difficulties and disasters, but must make good his ground, and stand firm against any accident that can befall him; for it is but the shock of the first wave that tells, and he will find the succeeding billows less overwhelming than imagination represented them; indeed, let him complain as he might, his impatience would be found to be the greatest mischief he endured. If I had to make choice either of continual prosperity or continued adversity, I hope that I should choose the latter; for in adversity no good man need lack comfort, whereas in prosperity most men are wanting in discretion. As things below merit not

my affection when I possess them, so the loss of them does not deserve my affliction or regret. I can call nothing my own except my sins.

Calamities that are prosperously overcome, are like those winds, which if they do not throw down trees, benefit them by carrying away dead branches and loosening the earth around their roots. That which is future or past is not hurting you, but only that which is present; and cannot your patience hold out for one instant at a time? If you remember that you are a man, one living in a house of life which has come down to you from men who have suffered aforetime, your misfortunes will not seem new to you; if you reflect on the infelicities which happen to others who are living to-day your own will seem but light to you.

If you are disquieted at anything, consider within yourself, 'is the thing of such worth, that for it I should so disturb myself as to lose my peace and tranquillity of mind?' Have you lost your dignities? You have not lost them, but surrendered them; they are the favours of fortune, rarely the symbols of merit. They have no brand of goodness but that which he who possesses them stamps upon them; if he be not good, they are not dignities but indignities. It cannot be said that a good man has lost his dignities, so much as that those persons, who called certain things 'dignities' and then conferred them upon him, have lost him.

Consider things really as they are and you can never be much troubled about any of them; if you have a glass esteem it as what it is, a glass which may be broken, and then you will never be angry when it is broken. As there is no gain upon earth without some loss, so there is no loss without some gain; if you have lost your wealth, you have lost some trouble with it; if you are degraded from some

post of dignity, you are free from many assaults of the envious. Set the compensation by the side of the loss and you will find them balance one another very nearly.

The world is a sea, whereon some men are wrecked ; but all are tossed with winds of opposition and subjected to the agitation of the waves of chance ; prove your prudence by striving to reach such a safe port as may secure you against being wrecked by the one and preserve you from being engulfed in the other. I honour the gallantry of Camillus, whose spirit was neither exalted unduly by the dictatorship nor depressed greatly by exile at Ardea.

I have often observed, that the most virtuous persons are not the greatest favourites of fortune. Even when fortune is prodigal of her favours to them she frequently intends to avert her face in time to come ; felicity that is grown old draws visibly near an end. On the other hand, we often see extreme misfortune succeeded by some slight measure of success.

‘ *Etiam mala fortuna suas habet levitates.* ’

And if you fall from your prince’s favour yet you may still be a ‘ *Rex Stoicus*,’ a king in your own microcosm ; and he who knows how to rule that well may indeed despise a crown ; thrones are but uneasy seats and crowns nothing but splendid miseries. The change in your fortunes may diminish your hopes but it will increase your quiet ; you must understand that favourites in the hands of great persons are but as counters raised and depressed in valuation at pleasure ; like sun-dials, they are not looked upon when the sun of majesty is not shining on them. There is no constancy either in the favour of fortune or in the affection of great persons, so

that no wise man will trust the one, or depend for safety upon the other.

To be without an estate and not to be in need of anything; to need and not to desire; to bear the changes of life without any change in yourself; these are conditions of existence which you must learn to make your own. You are a ball of clay; what is a ball the better for being thrown up or the worse for being cast down, or what does it matter to it if it chance to fall upon the ground? Whatsoever the thwartings of fortune are, let no discontent surprise and capture you; if the difficulty be within your power to adjust, manage it to your own contentment; but if you can do nothing it merely shews weakness in you to be disquieted.

Make the best of everything; if the ill that afflicts you admits of no alleviation you can at least refuse to let the consideration of it absorb your thoughts; in any case you must learn to submit to divine Providence. I always strike sail to divine Providence; such misfortunes as happen to me, and not by me, I try to be content with or at least not to complain of: for there is most room and need for the wisdom of God where there is least place and use for mine. He is truly wise who can alike endure evil and enjoy good. An humble soul must be like a white sheet prepared to receive that which the hand of Heaven shall imprint upon it. And never antedate your own misfortunes, for often by doing so men make themselves more miserable than they need be; and in such cases the apprehension of infelicity brings them more distress than the infelicity itself.

Amongst the various accidents of life I lift up my eyes to heaven when the earth affords me no relief; I have recourse to a higher and greater Nature when I find out the frailty of my own. Afflictions and

calamities are not altogether unwelcome to me, for I never experience the divine assistance and comfort more than when I am in some great extremity; and because I am under the protection of the Almighty I take but little care of myself.¹ I never beg of God other than general blessings, because He, in His divine wisdom, knows better what is good for me in particular matters than I do myself.

Discontent is a weakness which ill befits a noble soul; but often a fine character is so intent upon its own unhappiness that it forgets remedies. I would not have your thoughts disordered within, when there are so many things out of order in the world without. Hope will be your best antidote against all misfortune, and the thought of God's omnipotence will be an excellent means of fixing your soul above the reach of sorrow. If you are not so happy as you desire to be, it is yet well for you that you are not so miserable as you deserve to be; if your affairs progress not as well as you would that they should, it is well that they are not so ill as they might be. If you seriously consider, we have all received more good than we have done and done more evil than we have received.

Consider not life as a means of enjoying the fading pleasures of this world, but rather as an opportunity of preparation for a better; look forward to what you may be, a purified soul, rather than backward to what you have been, an 'unprofitable servant.' You need not fear death, that last change, since you have seen life so full of change; if you have lived well you have surely lived long enough; as soon as Death enters upon the stage, the tragedy is over. Believe me, he that anchors his hopes upon anything this side of Heaven will lose them when the storms of life rise high. Nothing can render the thoughts of

¹ *Sic De Britaine.*—H. S.

this life tolerable to a wise man except the humble expectation of another. I would not desire to live a moment if I thought I was not to live again.

As I look back upon my life it seems to have been full of misery, and I feel that I have as it were but a few days to live: happy miseries that end in joy, happy joy that has no end, happy end that is lost in eternity!

To serve God and to keep His commandments is the only true wisdom; and indeed, to have acted thus will (at the last, when the account of the world shall be cast up) be found to have led to the best preferment and the highest happiness. Remember that beyond the shore of mortal life lies the great ocean of life eternal.

With these last words I bid you

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